

# TERTULLIAN

APOLOGY                      DE SPECTACULIS

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

T. R. GLOVER

FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE AND PUBLIC ORATOR  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

# MINUCIUS FELIX

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

GERALD H. RENDALL, B.D., LITT.D., LL.D.

BASED ON THE UNFINISHED VERSION BY

W. C. A. KERR

1931



LONDON : WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD  
NEW YORK : G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

MCMXXXI

*Printed in Great Britain*



## PREFACE

WHEN it was decided to add a translation of Tertullian's *Apology* to the Loeb Library, it was the obvious thing to combine with it the "Golden Book" of Minucius Felix. There has been long controversy as to the connexion between the two works, and here the reader has a chance to compare them. Between them he will gain a fair idea of what Latin Christendom felt and believed in that age, of the ethical and cultural forces to which its intellectual leaders attached most weight, and of the new spirit which was to shape the thinking and writing of the Latin world throughout the Middle Ages. For Tertullian at least was a pioneer who led the way in a great literature. His brief tract, *De Spectaculis*, made famous by Gibbon, has been added to the volume.



## CONTENTS

### TERTULLIAN:

PAGE

INTRODUCTION . . . . . ix

APOLOGY . . . . . 2

DE SPECTACULIS . . . . . 230

### MINUCIUS FELIX:

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 304

OCTAVIUS . . . . . 314

INDEX . . . . . 439



## INTRODUCTION

“TERTULLIAN,” wrote a well-known scholar,<sup>a</sup> “may be said to have made Christian Latinity; it came from his hands rough-hewn, needing to be shaped and polished by later workers, but destined never to lose the general character which he had impressed upon it. He did more; he laid the foundation of Latin Christianity.”

The churchmen have never really liked Tertullian; they have found in him too much of the Puritan and the Covenanter; they read him uneasily and praise him with reservations. “A man of vehement and ill-disciplined character he was and always remained,” says Hort.<sup>b</sup> They remember how he left “the great Church” to follow the Montanist heresy, to become an adherent of a sect which fancied itself the recipient of a new activity of the Holy Spirit, and to attack the body that he left, the people whom he now described as the *psychici*—in other words, the “natural man”<sup>c</sup> as opposed to the spiritual. No one finds his Latin easy to translate: few read it with ease, fewer still with enjoyment. His vocabulary is not quite classical; his mind is *sui generis*—unexampled among Christians or pagans. No other writer approaches

<sup>a</sup> H. B. Swete, *Patristic Study*, p. 59.

<sup>b</sup> F. J. A. Hort, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 101.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14.

him in irony ; but he gets beyond irony—it is sarcasm, savage strident sarcasm at times ; and it jars upon churchmen and scholars alike. He offers a handle to the enemy, moreover, and Gibbon lays hold of the last chapters of the *De Spectaculis*. Hell is an unpopular doctrine, very intelligibly ; but, while many saintly persons have held it decorously, Tertullian in that passage lets himself go—a thing not done by churchmen and humanists ; he had provocation enough, as we may see ; but he gave Gibbon a magnificent chance, which he was not slow to take.<sup>a</sup> To make things worse, the enemy Gibbon reinforces his text with one of his footnotes : “ In order to ascertain the degree of authority which the zealous African had acquired, it may be sufficient to allege the testimony of Cyprian, the doctor and guide of all the Western churches. As often as he applied himself to his daily study of the writings of Tertullian, he was accustomed to say, *Da mihi magistrum*, Give me my master.” So Tertullian is available for anti-Christian controversy, and the *De Spectaculis* becomes, through Gibbon’s use of it, one of his most famous works.<sup>b</sup> Gibbon is an English Classic, and so is Matthew Arnold ; the two are in general the Englishman’s only sources for his impressions of Tertullian, “ The stern Tertullian,” “ the zealous African,” with

<sup>a</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xv. (vol. ii. p. 27 in Bury’s edition).

<sup>b</sup> I do not myself rank *De Spectaculis* among the best works of Tertullian, and I would not initially have chosen it for this volume ; still it illustrates the life of the period, and, with all its rhetoric and some anger, it is written from a moral standpoint, it brings out the character of pagan pleasures, and it shows a passion for Christ which is illuminating.

## INTRODUCTION

his "long variety of affected and unfeeling witticisms," writes Gibbon; and Arnold follows suit in his sonnet with "the fierce Tertullian" and "the unpitying Phrygian sect."

Before we leave these famous English critics, it may suffice to say that Gibbon translated with a judicious laxity and drew his "veil over the rest of this infernal description" for "the humanity of the reader," when there was nothing left for it to conceal; and that the historian (for the moment) and the critic alike forgot the use of the historical imagination and the duty laid upon us of understanding the man we criticize, his outlook, and the situation in which he spoke. What did he say? we ask. But Tertullian said a great deal more than Gibbon and Arnold quote in these two passages. What did he mean? and what was the experience that led him to speak as he did? are further questions, which they do not raise. They were, of course, busy with other issues; but this abrupt treatment of a master mind is not historical criticism.

I have tried elsewhere<sup>a</sup> to draw the portrait of Tertullian—to see him "steadily and whole," as Matthew Arnold teaches us. Here my task is to translate him, and the reader has only to turn a few pages to see whether I have succeeded or failed. But before Tertullian speaks for himself, one or two things are to be said.

Tertullian is a Latin of Africa—one of a great series. Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, and Apuleius, the cleverest of Latin humourists, Aristophanic in genius, in freedom of speech and ingenuity of speech,

<sup>a</sup> *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, Methuen & Co.

are his contemporaries. Cyprian, another African, as we have seen, studied his books intently a generation later ; Arnobius, Lactantius, perhaps Minucius Felix, follow, all significant figures. In the fourth century comes Augustine, the greatest of them all—the one supreme figure in Church History, from whatever aspect it is studied, between St. Paul and Martin Luther. Nor is it only in prose that Africa shines ; amid the general decline of poetry the graceful Dracontius has a charm of his own, as Gaston Boissier has made clear.<sup>a</sup> It was a Roman Africa that produced these men ; they were not Moors nor negroes, as an innocent African of America has supposed. Their Carthage owed more to Julius Caesar than to Dido. Roman Africa is a long way from the Eastern world, separated by sea and desert ; but it is not far from Italy, and the genius of the people is Latin, but with a difference. The colonist acquires sometimes a new accent by crossing the sea, or retains an old one, which later on may seem old-fashioned. The new environment induces a new mind, which is very often really the old mind of the race, fertilized and quickened by new experience and new problems. There may have been Moorish or Punic blood, unrecorded, in the veins of some of these great men ; but it is not necessary to postulate it on the ground of racial characteristics, for when we dogmatize upon race and its types we stray into an area ill-explored and very treacherous for those who guess.

*Nutricula causidicorum* is Juvenal's epithet for Roman Africa about A.D. 100<sup>b</sup> ; and among the

See Gaston Boissier's very charming book *Roman Africa*, in a readable translation. Putnam, 1898.

<sup>b</sup> Juvenal, vii. 148.



## INTRODUCTION

“pleaders” the nurtured few will give Tertullian a low place. He has moved too much in legal circles, and (like Cyprian after him) is only too lawyer-like in handling Christian problems. He grew up a pagan, as he tells us. Dates, names, episodes are all lacking in the story of the planting of the Christian religion in Africa, but that is not exceptional in the expansion of Christianity through the ancient world. The men and women who spread the faith were lowly enough—the fuller and the baker, sneered Celsus, and the foreign slave on the verandah, when the master of the house was out of hearing, illiterates one and all. Not all quite illiterate, however; for Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian were contemporaries of Celsus, and not noticeably less educated. Moreover, as Hort says,<sup>a</sup> there is good reason to believe that African Christians first created a Latin Bible. The style of the Vulgate is far from Ciceronian; for Jerome, when he made his revision, was bound, in spite of his own taste in Latinity, to keep as much as he could of the old version, hallowed to Latin readers by long association. The Latin was rough, ugly, and popular; but what a modern novelist<sup>b</sup> has said of “the Psalms of David in metre” in Scotland, was true of the old African Latin version: “They bring back the days when people did not sing them in churches, but on hillsides in remote fastnesses, at services conducted by a man with a price on his head, guarded by sentries lying prone upon the sky-line.” Popular Latin, the rude rendering of men who might have little refinement of speech and less culture, but were eager to have God’s Word in the language of the

F. J. A. Hort, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 94.

<sup>b</sup> Ian Hay in *The Willing Horse*

## TERTULLIAN

people—the story of struggle and martyrdom—long association with generations of simple readers—all this went to safeguard the familiar translation. And somewhere in the middle of the story comes Tertullian—a man of genius and a convert, the friend of martyrs, loyal to the lowly associates for whom he had given up the promise of a great career, a passionate nature, who felt quickly and intensely, endowed with the gift of putting all he feels into words that sting and give pain and into words that give a new sense of things and refuse to be forgotten. There is a certain kinship of mind with Carlyle to be seen in all he does ; his writings, like Carlyle's, are signed in every word.

He was born at Carthage, somewhere about the middle of the second century. It is not necessary nor possible to try to better this statement. His upbringing was, as he owns, pagan. The sudden interruption of his statement of Christian beliefs, when he comes to the Last Judgement, tells a vivid tale: "Haec et nos risimus aliquando. De vestris sumus. Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani."<sup>a</sup> Elsewhere he says the same: "hoc genus hominum quod et ipsi retro fuimus, caeci sine domini lumine."<sup>b</sup> He never looked at the Latin Bible; he says that nobody ever did till he became a Christian.<sup>c</sup> Why should they? Who would care to investigate the badly translated books of an obscure sect, not likely long to endure? Two centuries later Augustine found the old book repellent; it had no style; but this was the complaint of a highly-educated youth in a Christian home, and Tertullian never makes it. Tertullian studied other things to some purpose; he goes far outside the range of the modern scholar.

<sup>a</sup> *Apology*, 18. 4.

<sup>b</sup> *De Paenitentia*, 1.

<sup>c</sup> *De Testimonio Animae*, 1.

## INTRODUCTION

Much of what he read is lost, and his allusions are hard to follow. He makes slips of memory which we can correct—as when he mixes for the moment Cato the Censor with his great-grandson, who might under normal circumstances have been a Censor but was not. He draws, no doubt, as all his contemporaries did, from what we might call encyclopaedias—a low form of literature, if compilations are literature, and liable to be wrong. But, in any case, it is plain that he read enormously and remembered what he read—history, Virgil, philosophy, religion.

Later in life he denounced philosophers (cf. chap. 46) and above all any compromise that made Christianity Stoic or Platonic.<sup>a</sup> This last outburst is partly the natural spurt of a hot temper angered for the moment, but is partly due to a sound instinct. Whatever appeal Plato had for Greek Christians, Zeno was fundamentally no Christian. Yet in spite of his flashes of indignation, he never ceases to be a Stoic. He constantly returns to Nature—"it is a fundamental human right," he wrote to Scapula,<sup>b</sup> "a privilege of Nature, that any and every man should worship what he thinks right." There is *ius Naturae*. "It was not the pen of Moses that initiated the knowledge of the Creator . . . the *maior popularitas generis humani*, most of mankind, never heard the name of Moses, let alone his book, but they know the God of Moses none the less."<sup>c</sup> That is the Stoic *consensus*—the *conscientia communis*,<sup>d</sup> as he calls it, or in a happier phrase struck out in our book and later worked up into a separate tract, the *testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae*. This, like other strokes

<sup>a</sup> *De Praescriptione*, 7.

<sup>c</sup> *Adv. Marcion.* i. 10.

<sup>b</sup> *Ad Scapulam*, 2.

<sup>d</sup> *De Ieiunio*, 6.

## TERTULLIAN

of genius, is better than he intended. It is a poor hypothesis, says a Cambridge scholar in a happy *obiter dictum*, that will not explain more facts than it is designed to meet. "Our God is the God of Nature"<sup>a</sup>; so the natural and the rational are one, coming as they do from a rational creator (*auctor*)<sup>b</sup>; law is natural and Nature is legal.<sup>c</sup> "There is nothing to blush for in Nature,"<sup>d</sup> he says. (Readers of St. Jerome will recall passages that seem to imply a very different view.) "It may be questioned whether the flesh carries the soul or the soul the flesh, whether the flesh serves the soul or the soul serves the flesh. . . . What use of Nature, what enjoyment of the universe, what savour of the elements does the soul not enjoy by the agency of the flesh?"<sup>e</sup> And the world is so beautiful—"one flower of the hedge-row, I think—I do not say a flower of the meadows; one shell of any sea you like—I do not say the Red Sea; one feather of a moor-fowl—to say nothing of a peacock; will they speak to you of a mean Creator?" "If I offer you a rose, you will not scorn *its* Creator?"<sup>f</sup>

The common polymathy of his day, the encyclopaedia, law, Stoicism, and of course rhetoric,—these are his training. Every page shows the practised speaker, with every lawyer's trick, *tu quoque*, *ad hominem*, the quibble and quip of the debater. He is endlessly clever—too clever at times; and like the too clever he lapses into flat retorts and sterile ingenuities. The reader will chafe—the translator has chafed—under it again and again; and yet there are passages that for depth and directness made the

<sup>a</sup> *De Corona Militis*, 5.

<sup>b</sup> *De Anima*, 16.

<sup>c</sup> *De Cor. Mil.* 6.

<sup>d</sup> *De Anima*, 27.

<sup>e</sup> *De Resurrectione Carnis*, 7. <sup>f</sup> *Adv. Marcion.* i. 13, 14.

## INTRODUCTION

heart beat as one sought to render them—passages chiefly that refer to Christ. In his other writings also there is from time to time an appeal, a charm, that haunts the reader—if he has in any measure shared the experience. Gibbon, it is plain, had not, but Hort had, and Hort supplements his criticism by pronouncing Tertullian “a man of true genius,” and “a man of warm and passionate Christian feeling.”<sup>a</sup>

He grew up a pagan—“a sinner of every brand, born for nothing but repentance.”<sup>b</sup> Perhaps ; but if St. Paul is to be taken similarly at the foot of the letter, either he was rather worse or Tertullian a little better than the critics have found them. Hort disliked Tertullian’s language, and found it evidence for some foulness of mind ; perhaps he did not read Swift or Carlyle, who carry plainness of speech to the bitter end. Genius must be taken on its own terms. But Carthage, beside opportunities of the amplest for intellectual training, had temptations enough then and thereafter for a pagan youth of genius. At some time in his life—we have no dates—he married ; and references in his *De Anima* to the sense-perception of small infants and to their movements, tremors, and smiles in sleep, prompt an obvious deduction. Such observation would not surprise us in Augustine, but it is not common in Classical authors. He went—how frequently we do not know—to the amphitheatre ; it was not the amusement of the intellectual, as Cicero shows, but Tertullian speaks of laughing at the antics of gods in the arena.<sup>c</sup>

He went there, however, once too often ; or so one conjectures from one or two allusions. At the end of

<sup>a</sup> F. J. A. Hort, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 106.

<sup>b</sup> *De Paenitentia*, 12.

<sup>c</sup> *Apology*, 15.

## TERTULLIAN

the *Apology* <sup>a</sup> he speaks of Christian stubbornness as the teacher of the pagan ; what does it mean ? what is in it ? what is behind it ? A man, he suggests, cannot witness it without wondering. Fourteen years later, in writing to Scapula, he repeats this, which makes it look like a hint of autobiography : “ Every man who witnesses this great endurance is struck with some misgiving (*aliquo scrupulo percussus*) and is set on fire (*accenditur*) to look into it, to find what is its cause.” It is only too clear that *not* every man had this experience, but the man who will universalize it must have known it. Then mark how both passages continue : “ Who, when he has found out, does not draw near ? ” and, in the later tract : “ When he has learnt the truth, he instantly follows it himself as well (*et ipse statim sequitur*).” *Statim*—that is the man himself ; like his ardent kind, he never hesitates. “ It is the idlest thing in the world for a man to say, I wished it and yet I did not do it,” he says <sup>b</sup> ; and elsewhere : “ Why debate ? God commands (*Quid revolvīs ? Deus præcipit*).” <sup>c</sup> Hit or miss, right or wrong, it is instant intuition, followed by speech or action as swift and incisive. Like Carlyle, he must “ write with his nerves in a kind of a blaze.” Later on he writes a tract on Patience, like an invalid talking about health, he says, himself always sick with the fevers of impatience. One forgives him a great deal for this confession, and something, too, for the last words of the *Apology* in which he speaks of a passion to suffer martyrdom, and win all the grace that God has to give. No wonder that he writes a tract, “ On Flight in Persecution,” on the subject of Christians, whose only text, whose whole

<sup>a</sup> *Apology*, 50.

<sup>b</sup> *De Paenitentia*, 3.

<sup>c</sup> *Ibid* 4.

## INTRODUCTION

Bible, is "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to the next." He was for sticking it out; if he were burnt at the stake or had a leopard set upon him—whose will would it be? he asks; if God so willed, if it was the way in which men were to be won for Christ, he for one would not "flee to the next." And it appears that he did stick it out, and they did not martyr him. αἰδομένων ἀνδρῶν πλέονες σοοὶ ἢ ἐπέφονται.

But there were other ways of touching the heathen conscience, and he turned to his pen. One may surmise that the career of a pleader was lost, but he found the work for which he was built when he turned to defend his religion in writing. The great plea, written in the year 197-198, the reader has in his hand in this volume.

"Setting aside a little special pleading," writes Gwatkin in his *Church History*, "this is in the main a solid and successful defence. As an argument it is magnificent; and Tertullian's command of sarcasm is unsurpassed in history. But this is defiance, not persuasion; bitter satire, not the gentle pleading of Clement. If it ever reached the Proconsul of Africa, its audacious language would rather suggest to him that Christians were even more dangerous miscreants than he took them for." Perhaps it might have; Proconsuls, like other great officials, are apt to be a little stupid; their elevation dulls their senses. But other men have written "open letters" to ministers of the Crown, which were not intended to conciliate them, perhaps not to be read by them; and they have done it with a shrewd determination that other men would read what they wrote if the Proconsul did not, and Wisdom has been justified of all her children.

## TERTULLIAN

It has often been discussed whether Minucius Felix borrowed from Tertullian, and practically rewrote the *Apology*, or whether the debt was on the other side. In general to-day it seems agreed that Minucius is the later of the two writers. The reader of this volume will decide for himself. While the authors are vastly different, their books are more alike than a modern reader would expect. It is partly that the ancients had different canons or standards from our own as to the propriety of borrowing from other authors. The same difficulty meets the reader of Apuleius's *Golden Ass* and the less golden *Ass* attributed to Lucian, though now denied to him by some editors: which borrowed, or was there a common archetype? In the Christian Church the lines of apology were early laid down. The *testimonia* from the Old Testament to be used against the Jew began early to be collected; Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian and others use the same passages and in the same way; successive writers extend the collection, and do not improve it. Similarly the apologies addressed to the Emperor or the heathen world have much in common. The parallels are noted in the commentaries.



# INTRODUCTION

## THE APOLOGY

(TEXT, EDITIONS, TRANSLATIONS, ETC.)

THE *Apology* of Tertullian presents a phenomenon rare in Latin palaeography; there are two distinct manuscript traditions. In the New Testament there is in a rather less degree the same problem about the *Acts*; for the Codex Bezae (in the Cambridge University Library) has, with a small group of less important mss., certain readings which it is hard to reject as interpolations, but which are not in ordinary mss., nor in the great mss. on which the text to-day is generally based. In the case of the *Apology*, the main tradition rests on a family of some thirty mss. In 1584 François de Maulde (latinized as Modius), who was moving about in Germany to be out of the troubles of France, came in September to Fulda, and stayed there three months. He betook himself to the Benedictine monastery and, among the mss. which he found there and collated, he came on one of Tertullian's *Apology*. He had with him an edition published by René Laurent de la Barre (Barraeus) in Paris in 1580. With this he very carefully collated his newly found ms., but he did not publish his work. He gave it to a friend, from whom, through another, it came into the hands of François du Jon (Junius), who was engaged on a new edition of Tertullian in Holland, and, as his work was too far advanced to allow incorporation, he printed the collations as an appendix. The ms. was lost, perhaps for ever, in the disorders of the next century; scholars have to depend on the collation. Sigebert Havercamp, in his edition of 1718, propounded the idea that this Codex

## TERTULLIAN

Fuldensis represents a distinct recension of the work. That Tertullian re-handled his matter is very evident; for his *Ad Nationes*, written (we are told) in the same year as the *Apology* but earlier, contains a great deal of the same material. One long passage will be found in both recensions in chapter 19. But this is not the place for a discussion of the varying texts; it is a matter for the specialist and for a monograph.

A word or two must be said as to the text here printed. It is that of Oehler, the standard edition of the nineteenth century. A new edition is in process of appearing in the great Vienna Corpus of the Latin Fathers, but the *Apology* had not yet been reached. Perhaps illogically, the text used here for the *De Spectaculis* is taken from the Vienna Corpus, partly on the ground that that series must probably be the standard for a generation or two. In each case, however, certain variants have been printed, but in every place, where a word is changed, the reader is informed of the fact in a footnote. A few changes in punctuation are not recorded. Now that all is done and revision completed, the translator has to confess a certain regret that he did not stick to Oehler for both tracts.

It will be very plain to anyone who tries to translate Tertullian for himself that the author's language is not the Classical Latin of the schools, but that it goes far beyond Tacitus in complexity and strangeness—one almost writes, in unnatural combinations of word and syntax. A little inquiry will reveal that other translators and commentators have felt the same difficulty, and it will hardly be guessing to say that the transcribers of the mss. were from time to time as much perplexed. Whenever a ms. is copied, xxii

## INTRODUCTION

or even set up for press, certain things are apt to go wrong ; a word is misspelt and has to be corrected without the archetype ; a word or a line is dropped, and so on ; the cases are familiar. But here is an author who writes like nobody else. Every copyist, commentator, translator and reader will unconsciously assume the usual things and make the usual sort of correction, with disastrous results. To take a case from the *Apology*, in chapter 22 the demons are variously described as *venefici* and *benefici*. Here is a case (more frequent than good collators will admit) where it is not the attestation but the style of the author that must decide. Demons, he says, give diseases, and take them away ; are they then *venefici*, dealers, spiritual dealers of course, in subtle poison ? Or is it this ? That first they cause disease, in order to make you ask them to relieve you ; then they remove the disease they have given—"mighty kind !" says Tertullian. No one who long associates with Tertullian will hesitate to accept the canon that the ironical reading is more probable than the natural one ; the ordinary man would write the latter, obviously ; Tertullian would not. But no canon is of universal application. The dull reading may be right sometimes, but not so often as cautious critics suppose.

Here are a few problems of odd letters :

- 9. 15. *necandi* or *negandi*, involving a rearrangement of negatives. (Cf. a tangle of negatives in 36. 1.)
- 11. 11. *cum multis* or *cum vultis*.
- 14. 1. *volo* or *nolo* (but here he seems from his procedure *not* to wish).

## TERTULLIAN

17. 5. *potitur* or *patitur*.  
46. 7. *inimice* or *mimice*.  
47. 5. *mutabat* or *nutabat*.

The translator has been under the necessity—the law of the Loeb Library—of producing a text and a translation that correspond; and he hopes that purists among those who handle manuscripts will forgive a historian grappling with a stylist and a theologian of Tertullian's difficulty.

The reader will note (quite apart from questions of textual variants) a whole vocabulary of new words, or old words with unfamiliar meanings. For them a lexicographer is needed, or a dissertation (like Koziol's on Apuleius) on the language of Tertullian. Here, guided by Oehler and J. E. B. Mayor, the translator hopes he is not often wrong. Such words as the following, taken much as they come in the book, deserve a study, for which close reading of all Tertullian's many books is needed: *viderit*; *expungere* and *dispungere*; *census* and *censeo*; *parum si*; *bene quod*; *si forte*; *utique*; *quod sciam*; *deputare*; *exorbitare*; *famulo*; *retro*; *denotare*; *instrumenta* (books); *impendere*; *erogare*. The legal terms are a group by themselves, such as *titulus*, *elogium*, *provocare*, *praescribere*.

A word or two must be added as to editions, translations and commentaries. I have used three English translations—one in the old Oxford Library of the Fathers by C. Dodgson; another (more often) in the Ante-Nicene Library, though I find it difficult to determine which of several contributors named made it; and Professor Alexander Souter's translation

xxiv

## INTRODUCTION

printed, with Oehler's text and J. E. B. Mayor's notes, at the Cambridge University Press. I went with Professor Souter long ago to Mayor's lectures on the book, the strangest of all lectures. He translated rapidly—no manuscript of his translation seems to have survived—and then gave us incredible heaps of references, which are set out in the book. Again and again the notes utterly fail to give any help at all in a difficulty; and then they surprise the reader some pages later with useful assistance, or the references suddenly illuminate the matter. But that was John Mayor's way. I have used other English commentaries, but I have not found them very helpful; Oehler has been of more use than any of them, and I would also add Rauschen's more recent volume. I have had recourse to two French translations—one, a graceful paraphrase by the Abbé de Gourcy (1825), which would give the general sense pleasantly enough and leave the reader to guess how to connect it with the Latin; the other a far more efficient and scholarly piece of work, but with as much grace, by Jean-Pierre Waltzing, in the Budé Collection (1929). My debt to it is indicated, at least in part, by frequent references in the notes. One German translation, of very solid and sound scholarship, completes my list: Karl Ad. Heinrich Kellner has been a constant stand-by, and it has often been a relief to find, in revising this work, that Kellner had previously found the same meaning in the perplexing passage, no doubt with some indebtedness (like my own) to Oehler.

Lastly, I have to make my own apology in sending out Tertullian's. I have long felt that a translation should reproduce on the mind of the new reader, in the new language, as far as may be, the emotional,

## TERTULLIAN

intellectual and spiritual effect (perhaps reaction would be the more precise word) that the original produced, and was intended to produce, on the readers in the original speech. Hence the distressing impossibility of rendering Virgil or Horace, or (they say) Heine. Certain authors, like Homer and Cervantes, seem able to stand immense loss or reduction in translation. But I think my ideal will be accepted as the right one—an extremely exacting one. But Latin is not English, and I have had, in years of reading and teaching, too abundant evidence that a literal translation produces nothing of the effect we agree to be desirable. The structure of a Latin sentence is alien to English since Dryden, or since Bunyan. We put down our sentences in a different way and build our paragraphs on another plan. Again and again I find a literal translation of a sentence or paragraph (it may be the same thing) of Tertullian produces no effect on the mind beyond sheer paralysis; it *means* nothing. But Tertullian did mean something. So I have boldly abandoned his *qui's* and *quoniam's* and *ut's*, and tried to make an English thing of his *Apology*. The scholar who may consult this work for a particular passage can make his own way through the Latin construction; and I hope I may modestly say that, I could sometimes have done so too. But I am translating not a passage but a book, and I aim at giving the reader who wishes to read the whole, as opposed to a paragraph, the thread and fibre and texture of the whole, and something of the spirit of it. Tertullian, using a convention as old as Isocrates, writes his book as if it were a speech. In places it is highly rhetorical. A literal translation would be hopelessly unrhctorical. So I have broken up his sentences, and

xxvi

## INTRODUCTION

made my own, and tried to give the whole with as much as I can recapture of his oratory or rhetoric or whatever it is (in America it might be called "punch"), with the full force possible—biting, stinging, gripping stuff,—turning the reader into a listener and arguing at him. The grammar is different, the structure different, I know—but I hope there is something of the same passion, and for the same cause.





TERTULLIAN  
APOLOGY

## TERTULLIANI APOLOGETICUS

- 1 I. Si non licet vobis, Romani imperii antistites, in aperto et edito, in ipso fere vertice civitatis praesidentibus ad iudicandum palam dispicere et coram examinare quid sit liquido in causa Christianorum, si ad hanc solam speciem auctoritas vestra de iustitiae diligentia in publico aut timet aut erubescit inquirere, si denique, quod proxime accidit, domesticis iudiciis nimis operata infestatio sectae huius obstruit defensionem, liceat veritati vel occulta via tacitarum litterarum ad aures vestras pervenire.
- 2 Nihil de causa sua deprecatur, quia nec de conditione miratur. Scit se peregrinam in terris agere, inter extraneos facile inimicos invenire, ceterum genus, sedem, spem, gratiam, dignitatem in caelis habere. Unum gestit interdum, ne ignorata damnetur.
- 3 Quid hic deperit legibus in suo regno dominantibus, si audiat? An hoc magis gloriabitur potestas eorum, quo etiam auditam damnabunt veritatem? Ceterum inauditam si damnent, praeter invidiam iniquitatis etiam suspicionem merebuntur

---

<sup>a</sup> He appears to refer to some recent case, unknown, of course, to us, in which the new religion had been discovered in some family, taught in secret by slaves, etc. Cf. Celsus. cited by Origen, *Contra Cels.* iii. 55.

## TERTULLIAN: APOLOGY

I. If you, the magistrates of the Roman Empire,— 1  
you, who, in the light of day, set on high, at the very  
head of the state, preside to do justice,—if you are  
not allowed openly to investigate, face to face to  
examine, the Christian issue, to learn what it is in  
truth ;—if, in this phase of life, and this alone, your  
authority either dreads or blushes to inquire in public,  
with all the care that Justice demands ;—if finally (as  
recently befell) persecution of this school is so busy in  
the domestic tribunal<sup>a</sup> as to block the way of defence ;  
—then let truth be allowed to reach your ears at  
least by the hidden path of silent literature.

Truth asks no favours in her cause, since she has no 2  
surprise at her present position. Truth knows that  
she is a stranger on earth and easily finds enemies  
among men of another allegiance, but she knows that  
her race, home, hope, recompense, honour, are in  
heaven. For one thing meanwhile she is eager—not  
to be condemned without being known. The laws are 3  
supreme in their own sphere ; what loss can they  
suffer, if Truth be heard ? Why, would it not en-  
hance the glory of their supremacy to condemn Truth  
*after* hearing her ? But, if they condemn her un-  
heard—let us set on one side the odium such injustice  
will incur—they will rouse the suspicion that they

## TERTULLIAN

alicuius conscientiae, nolentes audire quod auditum damnare non possint.

4 Hanc itaque primam causam apud vos collocamus iniquitatis odii erga nomen Christianorum. Quam iniquitatem idem titulus et onerat, et revincit qui videtur excusare, ignorantia scilicet. Quid enim iniquius, quam ut oderint homines quod ignorant, etiam si res meretur odium? Tunc etenim meretur,  
5 cum cognoscitur an mereatur. Vacante autem meriti notitia, unde odii iustitia defenditur, quae non de eventu, sed de conscientia probanda est? Cum ergo propterea oderunt homines, quia ignorant quale sit quod oderunt, cur non liceat eiusmodi illud esse, quod non debeant odisse? Ita utrumque ex alterutro redarguimus, et ignorare illos, dum oderunt, et iniuste  
6 odisse, dum ignorant. Testimonium ignorantiae est, quae iniquitatem dum excusat, condemnat, cum omnes qui retro oderant, quia ignorabant quale sit quod oderant, simul desinunt ignorare, cessant et odisse. Ex his fiunt Christiani, utique de conperto, et incipiunt odisse quod fuerant, et profiteri quod  
7 oderant, et sunt tanti quanti et denotamur. Obsessam vociferantur civitatem; in agris, in castellis, in insulis Christianos; omnem sexum, aetatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem transgredi ad hoc nomen  
8 quasi detrimento maerent. Nec tamen hoc modo ad

have some secret sense that they are unjust, when they refuse to hear what, once heard, they cannot condemn.

This, then, is the first plea we lodge with you—the 4  
injustice of your hatred of the Christian name. The  
very excuse that seems to acquit it, at once aggravates  
and convicts that injustice—to wit, ignorance. For  
what could be more unjust than for men to hate a  
thing they do not know, even though it really de-  
serves hatred? It can only deserve hatred when it  
is known whether it does deserve it. But so long as 5  
nothing at all is known of its deserts, how can you  
defend the justice of the hatred? That must be  
established, not on the bare fact of its existence,  
but on knowledge. When men hate a thing simply  
because they do not know the character of what they  
hate, what prevents it being of a nature that does  
not deserve hate at all? Whichever alternative you  
choose, we maintain both points: they are ignorant  
so long as they hate, and their hate is unjust so long  
as they are ignorant. It is evidence of an ignorance 6  
which, while it is made an excuse for their injustice,  
really condemns it, that all who once hated Christian-  
ity because they were ignorant of the nature of what  
they hated, so soon as they cease to be ignorant of it,  
leave off hating it. From their number come the  
Christians; it is on the basis of knowledge, nothing  
else; and they begin to hate what once they were  
and to profess what once they hated; and we are as  
many as we are alleged to be. Men proclaim aloud 7  
that the state is beset with us; in countryside, in  
villages, in islands, Christians; every sex, age, con-  
dition, yes! and rank going over to this name. They 8  
lament it as an injury; and yet even so they do not

## TERTULLIAN

aestimationem alicuius latentis boni promovent animos. Non licet rectius suspicari, non libet propius experiri. Hic tantum curiositas humana torpescit. Amant ignorare, cum alii gaudeant cognovisse. Quanto magis hos Anacharsis denotasset imprudentes de prudentibus iudicantes quam immusicos de musicis!

9 Malunt nescire, quia iam oderunt. Adeo quod nesciant praeiudicant id esse quod, si sciant, odisse non poterant, quando, si nullum odii debitum deprehendatur, optimum utique sit desinere iniuste<sup>c</sup> odisse, si vero de merito constet, non modo nihil odii detrahatur, sed amplius adquiratur ad perseverantiam, etiam iustitiae ipsius auctoritate.

10 Sed non ideo, inquit, bonum, quia multos convertit : quanti enim ad malum performantur ? quanti transfugae in perversum ? Quis negat ? tamen quod vere malum est, ne ipsi quidem, quos rapit, defendere pro bono audent. Omne malum aut timore aut pudore  
11 natura perfudit. Denique malefici gestiunt latere, devitant apparere, trepidant deprehensi, negant accusati, ne torti quidem facile aut semper confitentur, certe damnati maerent. Dinumerant in semetipsos mentis malae impetus, vel fato vel astris imputant ; nolunt enim suum esse, quod<sup>1</sup> malum agnoscunt.  
12 Christianus vero quid simile ? Neminem pudet,

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler reads quia.*

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *Solon*, 5 ; Diogenes Laertius, i. 8. 5, 103.

<sup>b</sup> *malae mentis* may perhaps equally well denote some evil spirit, daemon, or the like, assailing the wretch with solicitation to evil. So Kellner takes it.

bestir their minds to reflect whether there may not be in it something good that escapes them. No ! it is forbidden to guess more shrewdly ; it does not please them to test it at closer quarters. Here, and here alone, human curiosity grows torpid. They love to be ignorant, though others rejoice to know. How much better the saying of Anacharsis about the ignorant judging the expert would have fitted them, than the unmusical who judge the musicians!<sup>a</sup> They prefer not to know because they already hate. Their prejudice implies that what they do not know really is what, if they were to know, they could not hate. Because, if no just ground for hatred be found, surely it is best to leave off hating unjustly. But if the hatred prove to be deserved, so far from any of it being abated, more hatred should be added to keep it up ; and Justice itself would endorse it.

But, says he, a thing is not necessarily good because it wins many adherents ; how many are predisposed to evil, how many desert to error ! Who denies that ? Yet a thing that is really bad, not even those who are caught by it dare to defend or to call good. Nature steeps every evil thing with either fear or shame. Why, evil-doers are eager to escape notice ; they avoid appearing ; they are anxious when caught ; they deny when accused ; even under torture they do not easily or always confess ; at all events, when condemned they lament. They tell how often they have felt the impulses of a mind distraught<sup>b</sup> ; they set their deeds down to fate or to the stars ; they will not admit to be their own what they recognize as evil. But look at the Christians ! There you have quite another story ; not a man of them is ashamed of it, not a man regrets—

## TERTULLIAN

neminem paenitet, nisi plane retro non fuisse. Si denotatur, gloriatur; si accusatur, non defendit; interrogatus vel ultro confitetur, damnatus gratias  
13 agit. Quid hoc mali est, quod naturalia mali non habet, timorem, pudorem, tergiversationem, paenitentiam, deplorationem? Quid? hoc malum est, cuius reus gaudet? cuius accusatio votum est et poena felicitas? Non potes dementiam dicere, qui revinceris ignorare.

1 II. Si certum est denique nos nocentissimos esse, cur a vobis ipsis aliter tractamur quam pares nostri, id est ceteri nocentes, cum eiusdem noxae eadem  
2 tractatio deberet intervenire? Quodcunque dicimur, cum alii dicuntur, et proprio ore et mercenaria advocacy utuntur ad innocentiae suae commendationem. Respondendi, altercandi facultas patet, quando nec  
3 liceat indefensos et inauditos omnino damnari. Sed Christianis solis nihil permittitur loqui quod causam purget, quod veritatem defendat, quod iudicem non faciat iniustum, sed illud solum expectatur quod odio publico necessarium est, confessio nominis, non  
4 examinatio criminis: quando, si de aliquo nocente, cognoscatis, non statim confesso eo nomen homicidae vel sacrilegi vel incesti vel publici hostis, ut de nostris  
5 elogiis loquar, contenti sitis ad pronuntiandum, nisi et consequentia exigatis, qualitatem facti, numerum, locum, modum, tempus, conscios, socios. De

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Acts of Scillitan Martyrs* (ed. Armitage Robinson).



unless, indeed, that he was not a Christian earlier. If he is denounced [as a Christian], he glories in it; if he is accused, he does not defend himself; when he is questioned, he confesses without any pressure; when he is condemned, he renders thanks.<sup>a</sup> What sort of 13 evil is that which has none of the native marks of evil—fear, shame, shuffling, regret, lament? What? is that evil where the criminal is glad, where accusation is the thing he prays for, and punishment is his felicity? It is not for you to call it madness—you, a man convicted of sheer ignorance of it.

II. But now, if it is really certain that we are of all 1 men the most criminal, why do you yourselves treat us otherwise than those like us, the rest of the criminal classes, when the same treatment belongs to the same fault? Whatever you charge against us, 2 when you so charge others, they use their own eloquence, they hire the advocacy of others, to prove their innocence. There is freedom to answer, to cross-question, since in fact it is against the law for men to be condemned, undefended and unheard. But to Christians alone it is forbidden to say any- 3 thing to clear their case, to defend Truth, to save the judge from being unjust. No! one thing is looked for, one alone, the one thing needful for popular hatred—the confession of the name. Not investigation of the charge! Yet, if you are trying any other 4 criminal, it does not follow at once from his confessing to the name of murderer, or temple-robber, or adulterer, or enemy of the state (to touch on *our* indictments!), that you are satisfied to pronounce sentence, unless you pursue all the consequent investigation, such as the character of the act, how often, where, how, when, he did it, his accessories, his

## TERTULLIAN

nobis nihil tale, cum aequè extorqueri oporteret quod cum falso iactatur, quot quisque iam infanticidia degustasset, quot incesta contenebrasset, qui coci, qui canes adfuissent. O quanta illius praesidis gloria, si eruisset aliquem, qui centum iam infantes comedisset !

- 6 Atquin invenimus inquisitionem quoque in nos prohibitam. Plinius enim Secundus cum provinciam regeret, damnatis quibusdam Christianis, quibusdam gradu pulsus, ipsa tamen multitudine perturbatus, quid de cetero ageret, consuluit tunc Traianum imperatorem, adlegans praeter obstinationem non sacrificandi nihil aliud se de sacramentis eorum conperisse quam coetus antelucanos ad canendum Christo et<sup>1</sup> deo, et ad confoederandam disciplinam, homicidium, adulterium, fraudem, perfidiam et cetera scelera
- 7 prohibentes. Tunc Traianus rescripsit hoc genus inquirendos quidem non esse, oblatos vero puniri
- 8 oportere. O sententiam necessitate confusam! Negat inquirendos ut innocentes, et mandat puniendos ut nocentes. Parcit et saevit, dissimulat et animadvertit. Quid temetipsum censura circumvenis ?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The mss. appear to read et, which has been emended to ut, to square with Pliny's Christo quasi deo ("as if a God").*

<sup>2</sup> *Oehler reads quid temetipsam, censura, circumvenis? "Why cheat thyself, O Judgement?" The reading is far from impossible, but there is ms. support for the change, accepted by Kellner.*

---

<sup>a</sup> See ch. 7.

<sup>b</sup> See the most famous of all Pliny's letters, book x. ep. 96, and Trajan's reply; and on both see W. M. Ramsay, *Church and Roman Empire*, p. 187; H. M. Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, vol. i. ch. vii. pp. 128 ff.; and F. C. Conybeare, *The Historical Christ*, 162. Also Bishop Lightfoot, *Apostolic*

confederates. In our case nothing of the kind ! Yet 5 it ought just as much to be wrung out of us (when-ever that false charge is made) how many murdered babies each of us had tasted, how many acts of incest he had done in the dark, what cooks were there—yes, and what dogs.<sup>a</sup> Oh ! the glory of that magistrate who had brought to light some Christian who had eaten up to date a hundred babies !

And yet we find it is forbidden even to hunt us 6 down. For when Plinius Secundus was governing his province and had condemned some Christians and driven others from their steadfastness, and still the sheer numbers concerned worried him as to what he ought to do thereafter, he consulted the Emperor Trajan.<sup>b</sup> He asserted that, apart from an obstinacy that refused to sacrifice, he had learnt nothing about the Christian mysteries—nothing beyond meetings before dawn to sing to Christ and to God, and to band themselves together in discipline, forbidding murder, adultery, dishonesty, treachery, and the other crimes. Trajan replied in a 7 rescript that men of this kind were not to be sought out, but if they were brought before Pliny they must be punished. What a decision, how inevitably 8 entangled ! He says they must not be sought out, implying they are innocent ; and he orders them to be punished, implying they are guilty. He spares them and rages against them, he pretends not to see and punishes. Why cheat yourself with your judgement ? If you condemn them, why not hunt them

*Fathers*, part ii. vol. i. p. 55, on the genuineness of the letter, quoting Renan on the improbability of a Christian forger being able “ si admirablement imiter la langue précieuse et raffinée de Pline.”

## TERTULLIAN

Si damnas, cur non et inquiris? si non inquiris, cur non et absolvis? Latronibus vestigandis per universas provincias militaris statio sortitur. In reos maiestatis et publicos hostes omnis homo miles est; ad socios, ad conscios usque inquisitio<sup>e</sup> extenditur.

9 Solum Christianum inquiri non licet<sup>e</sup>, offerri licet, quasi aliud esset actura inquisitio quam oblationem. Damnatis itaque oblatum quem nemo voluit requisitum, qui, puto, iam non ideo meruit poenam, quia nocens est, sed quia non requirendus inventus est.

10 Itaque nec in illo ex forma malorum iudicandorum agitis erga nos, quod ceteris negantibus tormenta adhibetis ad confitendum, solis Christianis ad negandum, cum, si malum esset, nos quidem negaremus, vos vero confiteri tormentis compelleretis. Neque enim ideo non putaretis requirenda quaestionibus scelera, quia certi essetis admitti ea ex nominis confessione, qui hodie de confesso homicida, scientes homicidium quid sit, nihilominus ordinem extorquetis  
11 admissi. Quo perversius, cum praesumatis de sceleribus nostris ex nominis confessione, cogitis tormentis de confessione decedere, ut negantes nomen pariter utique negemus et scelera, de quibus ex  
12 confessione nominis praesumpseratis. Sed, opinor,

---

<sup>e</sup> Irony, as so often throughout.

down? If you do not hunt them down, why not also acquit them? To track down bandits through all the provinces is a duty assigned by lot to the garrisons. Against those guilty of treason, against public enemies, every man is a soldier; inquiry is extended to confederates, to accessories. The 9 Christian alone may not be hunted down; but he may be haled before the magistrate; as if hunting down led to anything but haling to the court. So you condemn a man when haled to court—a man whom nobody wished to be sought out, who (I suppose) really has not deserved punishment because he is guilty, but because, forbidden to be looked for, he was found!

Then, again, in that matter, you do not deal with 10 us in accordance with your procedure in judging criminals. If the other criminals plead Not guilty, you torture them to make them confess; the Christians alone you torture to make them deny. Yet if it were something evil, we should deny our guilt, and you would use torture to force us to confess it. For you would not hold judicial investigation of our crimes needless, on the ground that you were certain of their commission from the confession of the name; for to this day, though the murderer confesses, and though you know what murder is, none the less you rack out of him the story of his crime. So much the 11 more upside down is your procedure with us, when you presume our crimes from our confession of the name and then try by torture to force us to cancel our confession, in order that, by denying the name, we may really deny the crimes too, which you had presumed from our confession of the name. But, of 12 course,<sup>a</sup> I suppose you do not want us to be done to

## TERTULLIAN

non vultis nos perire, quos pessimos creditis. Sic enim soletis dicere homicidae Nega, laniari iubere sacrilegum, si confiteri perseveraverit. Si non ita agitis circa nos nocentes, ergo nos innocentissimos iudicatis, cum quasi innocentissimos non vultis in ea confessione perseverare, quam necessitate, non iustitia damnandam a vobis sciatis.

- 13 Vociferatur homo: Christianus sum. Quod est dicit; tu vis audire quod non est. Veritatis extorquendae praesides de nobis solis mendacium elaboratis audire. Hoc sum, inquit, quod quaeris an sim. Quid me torques in perversum? Confiteor, et torques: quid faceres, si negarem? Plane aliis negantibus non facile fidem accommodatis: nobis, si
- 14 negaverimus, statim creditis. Suspecta sit vobis ista perversitas, ne qua vis lateat in occulto, quae vos adversus formam, adversus naturam iudicandi, contra ipsas quoque leges ministret. Nisi fallor enim, leges malos erui iubent, non abscondi, confessos damnari praescribunt, non absolvi. Hoc senatusconsulta, hoc principum mandata definiunt. Hoc imperium, cuius ministri estis, civilis, non tyrannica dominatio est.
- 15 Apud tyrannos enim tormenta etiam pro poena adhibebantur: apud vos soli quaestioni temperatur. Vestram illis servate legem usque ad confessionem necessariam, et iam si confessione praeveniantur,

---

<sup>a</sup> *i.e.*, tortured to make him deny.

<sup>b</sup> The eventual meaning is clear, though the steps to it are not: If you treat us in exactly the opposite way to other criminals, it means that you really believe us innocent. The whole thing would be simplified by omitting *nos* before *nocentes*, which one ms. does omit. But in Tertullian it is far from a safe rule to prefer the simpler or directer reading.

death—though you believe us the worst of men. For that is your way—to say to the murderer, “Deny!” and to order the temple-thief to be mangled,<sup>a</sup> if he will insist on confession! If that is not your procedure<sup>b</sup> with regard to us in our guilt, then it is clear you count us the most innocent of men, when you will not have us (as being the most innocent of men) persist with a confession which you know you will have to condemn, not because justice requires it, but of necessity.

A man shouts, “I am a Christian.” He says 13 what he is. You, sir, wish to hear what he is *not*. Presiding to extort the truth, you take infinite pains in our case, and ours alone, to hear a lie. “I am,” says he, “what you ask if I am; why torture me to twist the fact round? I confess, and you torture me. What would you do if I denied?” Clearly, when others deny, you do not readily believe them; if we have denied, you at once believe us. Let this 14 topsy-turvy dealing of yours suggest to you the suspicion that there may be some hidden power which makes tools of you against the form, yes, against the very nature, of judicial procedure, against the laws themselves into the bargain. For, unless I am mistaken, the laws bid evil men to be brought to light, not hidden; they enact that those confessing be condemned, not acquitted. This is laid down by decrees of the Senate, by rescripts of the Emperors. This Empire of which you are ministers is the rule of citizens, not of tyrants. With tyrants torture was 15 also used as penalty; with you, it is moderated and used for examination only. Maintain your law by it till the necessary confession is made. If it is forestalled by confession, it serves no purpose. It is the

## TERTULLIAN

- vacabunt : sententia opus est : debito poenae nocens  
16 expungendus est, non eximendus. Denique nemo illum gestit absolvere. Non licet hoc velle, ideo nec cogitur quisquam negare. Christianum hominem omnium scelerum reum, deorum, imperatorum, legum, morum, naturae totius inimicum existimas, et cogis negare, ut absolveras quem non poteris absolvere  
17 nisi negaverit. Praevaricaris in leges. Vis ergo neget se nocentem, ut eum facias innocentem, et quidem invitum iam, nec de praeterito reum. Unde ista perversitas, ut etiam illud non recogitetis, sponte confesso magis credendum esse quam per vim neganti? vel ne compulsus negare non ex fide negarit et absolutus ibidem post tribunal de vestra rideat aemulatione iterum Christianus?
- 18 Cum igitur in omnibus nos aliter disponitis quam ceteros nocentes, ad unum contendendo, ut de eo nomine excludamur (excludimur enim si faciamus quae faciunt non Christiani), intellegere potestis non scelus aliquod in causa esse, sed nomen, quod quaedam ratio aemulae operationis insequitur, hoc primum agens, ut homines nolint scire pro certo quod se nescire  
19 pro certo sciunt. Ideo et credunt de nobis quae non probantur, et nolunt inquiri, ne probentur non esse quae malunt credidisse, ut nomen illius aemulae

---

<sup>a</sup> *i.e.*, we are expelled from the Church (and dissociated from the Name) if we deny our Christianity, as non-Christians of course do.

<sup>b</sup> The demon-world.

<sup>c</sup> This intolerable antithesis seems to mean that the demons wish men (who really know themselves to be ignorant as to Christianity) to avoid clearing up their minds with definite knowledge about it.



sentence that is called for then ; the guilty man must cancel the penalty due by enduring it, not by being relieved of it. No, nobody desires to acquit him ; it 16 is not permissible to wish it ; that is why no man is forced to deny [his guilt]. But the Christian, a man guilty of every crime, the enemy of gods, emperors, laws, morals, of all Nature together—so you conceive of him ; and then you force him to deny the charge, in order to acquit him—a man you will not be able to acquit unless he has denied. You are play- 17 ing fast and loose with the laws. You want him, then, to deny that he is guilty, in order to *make* him innocent—and quite against his will, too, by now ; and even his past is not to count against him. What is the meaning of this confusion ? this failure to reflect that more credence is to be given to a voluntary confession than to a forced denial ? to reflect that, when compelled to deny, he may not honestly deny ; and, once acquitted, he may again after your tribunal laugh at your enmity, once more a Christian ?

So, when in every detail you treat us differently 18 from all other criminals—as you do in concentrating on the one object of dissociating us from that name (for we are dissociated from it, if we do what men not Christians do <sup>a</sup>)—you can gather that the gravamen of the case is not any crime but a name. This name, a certain rational agency, <sup>b</sup> rival in its operation, assails, with the prime motive that men may be unwilling to know for certain, what they certainly know they do not know. <sup>c</sup> So they believe things about us which 19 are not proved ; and they are unwilling for inquiry to be made, in case things they prefer to have believed should be proved untrue ; and the object is that the name, which is the enemy of that rival

## TERTULLIAN

rationis inimicum praesumptis, non probatis criminibus de sua sola confessione damnetur. Ideo torquemur confitentes et punimur perseverantes  
 20 et absolvimur negantes, quia nominis proelium est. Denique quid de tabella recitatis illum Christianum? Cur non et homicidam? Si homicida Christianus,<sup>1</sup> cur non et incestus vel quodcunque aliud esse nos creditis? In nobis solis pudet aut piget ipsis nominibus scelerum pronuntiare? Christianus si nullius criminis nomine reus est, valde incestum, si solius nominis crimen est.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 III. Quid? quod ita plerique clausis oculis in odium eius inpingunt, ut bonum alicui testimonium ferentes admisceant nominis exprobrationem. Bonus vir Gaius Seius, tantum quod Christianus. Item alius: Ego miror Lucium Titium sapientem virum repente factum Christianum. Nemo retractat, ne ideo bonus Gaius et prudens Lucius, quia Christianus, aut ideo
- 2 Christianus, quia prudens et bonus. Laudant quae sciunt, vituperant quae ignorant, et id quod sciunt eo quod ignorant inrumpunt, cum sit iustius occulta de manifestis praeiudicare quam manifesta de occultis
- 3 praedamnare. Alii, quos retro ante hoc nomen vagos, viles, improbos noverant, ex ipso denotant quod laudant. Caecitate odii in suffragium inpingunt: Quae mulier! quam lasciva, quam festiva! Quis

<sup>1</sup> The question marks may be shifted as in the English.

<sup>2</sup> The sentence is another of Tertullian's favourite rhetorical devices. The MSS. vary between *nomine reus* and *nomen reus*; they give *incestum* which editors have altered to *incestum*. What Tertullian actually wrote, we can only guess; the English is no more than a desperate and doubtful attempt to recapture what he may have written. The general sense behind his jingle or antithesis is plain enough in outline.

agency, may, because of crimes presumed but not proven, be condemned simply on its own confession. So we are tortured when we confess; we are punished when we persist; we are acquitted when we deny; all because the battle is for a name. Finally, in reading the charge, why do you call the 20 man a Christian, why not a murderer too, if a Christian is a murderer? Why not incestuous? or anything else you believe us to be? Or is it that in our case, and ours alone, it shames you, or vexes you, to use the actual names of our crimes? If a Christian, with no charge laid against him, is defendant because of a name, how shocking the name must be, if the charge consist of a name and nothing more.

III. Well, then, what does it mean, when most 1 people shut their eyes and run so blindfold into hatred of that name, that, even if they bear favourable testimony to a man, they throw in some detestation of the name? "A good man," they say, "this Caius Seius, only that he is a Christian." Then another says: "I am surprised that that wise man, Lucius Titius, has suddenly become a Christian." Nobody reflects whether Caius is good, and Lucius sensible, just because he is a Christian, or is a Christian because he is sensible and good. They praise what 2 they know and blame what they don't know; and their knowledge they spoil with their ignorance; though it is fairer to prejudge what is hidden by what is manifest, than to condemn in advance what is manifest because of what is hidden. In other cases, 3 persons known before they had the name to have been vagabond, worthless, and wicked, they condemn and praise in one breath; in the blindness of hate they stumble into commendation. "What a woman!

## TERTULLIAN

- iuvenis ! quam lascivus, quam amasius ! Facti sunt Christiani ! Ita nomen emendationi imputatur.
- 4 Nonnulli etiam de utilitatibus suis cum odio isto paciscuntur, contenti iniuria, dum ne domi habeant quod oderunt. Uxorem iam pudicam maritus iam non zelotypus eiecit,<sup>1</sup> filium iam subiectum pater retro patiens abdicavit, servum iam fidelem dominus olim mitis ab oculis relegavit ; ut quisque hoc nomine emendatur, offendit. Tanti non est bonum quanti odium Christianorum.
- 5 Nunc igitur, si nominis odium est, quis nominum reatus ? Quae accusatio vocabulorum, nisi si aut barbarum sonat aliqua vox nominis, aut infaustum aut maledicum aut inpudicum ? Christianus vero, quantum interpretatio est, de unctione deducitur. Sed et cum perperam Chrestianus pronuntiatur a vobis (nam nec nominis certa est notitia penes vos), de suavitate vel benignitate compositum est. Oditur itaque in hominibus innocuis etiam nomen innocuum.
- 6 At enim secta oditur in nomine utique sui auctoris. Quid novi, si aliqua disciplina de magistro cognomen tum sectatoribus suis inducit ? Nonne philosophi de auctoribus suis nuncupantur Platonici, Epicurei, Pythagorici ? etiam a locis conventiculorum et statio-

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler deletes eiecit.*

---

<sup>a</sup> See Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25. 4 "Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit." J. C. Rolfe, in the Loeb edition *ad loc.*, notes the word. "It is uncertain whether Suetonius is guilty of an error in chronology" [and in spelling, as Tertullian suggests] "or is referring to some Jew of that name. The former seems probable because of the absence of *quodam*." It should be remembered that to Greeks and Romans *Chrestos* was more familiar and more obvious as a name (even though rarely if ever used as a

### APOLOGETICUS, III. 3-6

how wanton, how frolicsome ! What a young man !  
how wanton, how gallant ! They have become Chris-  
tians." So the name follows the reformation as a fresh  
charge. Some men go further, bartering their own 4  
advantage against this hatred, content to suffer loss,  
provided they do not have at home what they hate.  
The wife is chaste now ; but the husband has ceased  
to be jealous, and has turned her out. The son is  
now submissive ; but the father, who used to bear  
with his ways, has disinherited him. The slave is  
faithful now ; but the master, once so gentle, has  
banished him from his sight. As sure as a man  
is reformed by the name, he gives offence. The  
advantage does not balance the hatred felt for  
Christians.

Tell me, then, if it is hatred of a name, how can you 5  
indict names ? What charge can lie against words,  
unless the pronunciation of some name has a bar-  
barous sound about it—something unlucky or  
scurrilous or lewd ? " Christian," so far as transla-  
tion goes, is derived from " anointing." Yes, and  
when it is mispronounced by you " Chrestian " (for  
you have not even certain knowledge of the mere  
name) it is framed from " sweetness " or " kind-  
ness." <sup>a</sup> So in innocent men you hate even the  
innocent name.

Ah, but the school is in fact hated for the name of 6  
its founder ! What novelty is it, if some way of life  
gives its followers a name drawn from their teacher ?  
Are not the philosophers called after their founders  
—Platonists, Epicureans, Pythagoreans ? yes, and  
from the places where they gathered, where they  
name) than *Christos*, which is a translation of a word quite  
foreign to them.

## TERTULLIAN

num suarum Stoici, Academici? aequè medici ab Erasistrato et grammatici ab Aristarcho, coci etiam  
7 ab Apicio? nec tamen quemquam offendit professio nominis cum institutione transmissa ab institutore. Plane, si qui probavit malam sectam et ita malum et auctorem, is probabit et nomen malum dignum odio de reatu sectae et auctoris, ideoque ante odium nominis competebat prius de auctore sectam recog-  
8 noscere vel auctorem de secta. At nunc utriusque inquisitione et agnitione neglecta nomen detinetur, nomen expugnatur, et ignotam sectam, ignotum et auctorem vox sola praedamnat, quia nominantur, non quia revincuntur.

1 IV. Atque adeo quasi praefatus haec ad sugillandam odii erga nos publici iniquitatem, iam de causa innocentiae consistam, nec tantum refutabo quae nobis obiciuntur, sed etiam in ipsos retorquebo qui obiciunt, ut ex hoc quoque sciant homines in Christianis non esse quae in se nesciunt esse, simul uti erubescant accusantes non dico pessimi optimos, sed iam, ut  
2 volunt, compares suos. Respondebimus ad singula quae in occulto admittere dicimur, quae illos palam

---

<sup>a</sup> The famous physician of the court of Seleucus I., hero of a much quoted anecdote about the curing of the king's son. He is said to have come near the discovery of the circulation of the blood.

<sup>b</sup> The great editor of the text of Homer. His name became a proverb for a shrewd critic; cf. Cicero, *Ad Att.* i. 14. 3; Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 450.

<sup>c</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* iv. 1, speaks of a famous epicure of this name in the reign of Tiberius; but others of the same name and fame are mentioned; and *Apicius* is the title of a work

took their stand—Stoics, Academics ? and physicians in the same way from Erasistratus,<sup>a</sup> and grammarians from Aristarchus<sup>b</sup>—cooks too from Apicius<sup>c</sup> ? Yet 7 nobody is ever offended by the avowal of a name, handed down with his teaching from the teacher. Clearly, if a man has proved the school a bad one and its founder as bad, he will prove the bad name also to be worthy of hate because of the guilt of the school and the founder. So before you hated the name, it would have been proper first to judge the school in the light of the founder, or the founder in the light of the school. But, as things are, inquiry as to both and 8 knowledge of both are allowed to slide ; the name is picked out ; the name is the object of attack. The school is unknown ; the founder is unknown ; a word of itself condemns both in advance—because they bear a name, not because they are convicted of anything.

IV. So much, then, by way of preface as it were, to 1 assail the injustice that is in the general hatred felt for us. Now I will take my stand on the plea of our innocence. I will not only refute the charges brought against us, but I will turn them against those who bring them ; so that, in this too, all may learn that they will not find in Christians what they are unaware of in themselves, and that at the same time they may blush to accuse—no, I will not say that the worst of men are accusing the best, but I will put it, as they would wish, and say—their equals. We will reply 2 in detail as to the crimes we are alleged to commit in secret, but which we find them openly committing—

on cookery (in ten books) compiled some centuries later ; cf. Wight Duff, *Lit. Hist. Rome Silver Age*, p. 131, who finds it surprising and ill-written.

## TERTULLIAN

admittentes invenimus, in quibus scelesti, in quibus vani, in quibus damnandi, in quibus inridendi deputamur.

- 3 Sed quoniam, cum ad omnia occurrit veritas nostra, postremo legum obstruitur auctoritas adversus eam, ut aut nihil dicatur retractandum esse, post leges aut ingratis necessitas obsequii praeferatur veritati, de legibus prius concurram vobiscum ut cum tutoribus  
4 legum. Iam primum cum dure<sup>1</sup> definitis dicendo : Non licet esse vos ! et hoc sine ullo retractatu humaniore praescribitis, vim profitemini et iniquam ex arce dominationem, si ideo negatis licere, quia vultis, non  
5 quia debuit non licere. Quodsi, quia non debet, ideo non vultis licere, sine dubio id non debet licere quod male fit, et utique hoc ipso praeiudicatur licere quod bene fit. Si bonum invenero esse quod lex tua prohibuit, nonne ex illo praeiudicio prohibere me non potest quod, si malum esset, iure prohiberet ? Si lex tua erravit, puto, ab homine concepta est ; neque enim de caelo ruit.
- 6 Miramini hominem aut errare potuisse in lege condenda aut resipuisse in reprobanda ? Non enim et ipsius Lycurgi leges a Lacedaemoniis emendatae tantum auctori suo doloris incusserunt, ut in secessu  
7 inedia de semetipso iudicarit ? Nonne et vos cotidie experimentis inluminantibus tenebras antiquitatis totam illam veterem et squalentem silvam legum novis

<sup>1</sup> *v.l.* iure.

---

<sup>a</sup> Judaism was *religio licita*, had a *vectigalis libertas* (see below, ch. 21) ; Christianity was in a different position. See E. G. Hardy, *Christianity and the Roman Government*. There is more controversy here than can be handled in a footnote.

<sup>b</sup> A reference to Greek tyrants and their garrisons.



matters in which we are set down as guilty, empty-headed, damnable, ridiculous.

Truth, which is ours, meets all the charges ; and 3 yet, in the last resort, the authority of the laws is cited against her—to the effect, either that, after the laws have spoken, there is (they say) no re-opening the matter, or that necessity of obedience, though you regret it, takes precedence of truth ; in view of all which I will meet you, as guardians of the laws, on the legal issue first. To begin, then : when you harshly cut 4 the case short by saying, “ Your existence is illegal <sup>a</sup> ” ; when you lay it down without any more humane reconsideration, your dictum means mere force, an unjust tyranny from the citadel <sup>b</sup>—if you say a thing is not lawful simply because that is your will, and not because it *ought* not to be lawful. If, because a 5 thing *ought* not to be lawful, you therefore wish it not to be lawful, all will agree that what is ill done ought not to be lawful—a principle which involves a presumption that what is a right thing to do is lawful. If I find that to be good which your law has forbidden, does not that presumption imply that the law cannot forbid me to do it, since it would only rightly forbid it if it were bad ? If your law has made a mistake, well, I think, it was the creation of man ; it did not come down from heaven.

Do you wonder that a man may have made a mis- 6 take in framing a law, or returned to sense in disallowing his law ? Is it not the fact that the laws of Lycurgus himself were altered by the Spartans and that this caused their author such grief that he withdrew and condemned himself to starve to death ? Yes, and you 7 yourselves, as experiment every day lightens the darkness of antiquity, do *you* not lop and fell all that old and

## TERTULLIAN

- principalium rescriptorum et edictorum securibus  
 8 truncatis et caeditis? Nonne vanissimas Papias leges,  
 quae ante liberos suscipi cogunt quam Iuliae matri-  
 monium contrahi, post tantae auctoritatis senectutem  
 heri Severus, constantissimus principum, exclusit?  
 9 Sed et iudicatos in partes secari a creditoribus leges  
 erant, consensu tamen publico crudelitas postea erasa  
 est, in pudoris notam capitis poena conversa est.  
 Bonorum adhibita proscriptio suffundere maluit  
 hominis sanguinem quam effundere.
- 10 Quot adhuc vobis repurgandae latent leges, quas  
 neque annorum numerus neque conditorum dignitas  
 commendat, sed aequitas sola? et ideo cum iniquae  
 recognoscuntur, merito damnantur, licet damnent.
- 11 Quomodo iniquas dicimus? Immo, si nomen puniunt,  
 etiam stultas: si vero facta, cur de solo nomine  
 puniunt facta, quae in aliis de admissio, non de nomine  
 probata defendunt? Incestus sum, cur non requi-  
 runt? Infanticidia cur non extorquent? In deos, in  
 Caesares aliquid committo, cur non audior qui habeo
- 12 quo purger? Nulla lex vetat discuti quod prohibet  
 admitti, quia neque iudex iuste ulciscitur, nisi co-  
 gnoscat admissum esse quod non licet, neque civis  
 fideliter legi obsequitur ignorans quale sit quod
- 13 ulciscitur lex. Nulla lex sibi soli conscientiam iusti-

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 25; and excursus of Furneaux in his edition.

<sup>b</sup> The jingle is meant to keep the play on *suffundere* and *effundere*. \*

squalid jungle of laws with the new axes of imperial rescripts and edicts? Why, those absurd Papian laws <sup>a</sup> 8 which require people to have children at an earlier age than the Julian laws require them to be married—did not the valiant Emperor Severus clear them out but yesterday for all their old age and authority? Yes, and the laws had it of old that the debtor should 9 on being sentenced be cut up by the creditors; yet by common agreement that cruelty was erased, and for the punishment of death there was substituted a mark of disgrace; the confiscation of his goods that was applied meant a preference for the blush spread rather than the blood shed.<sup>b</sup>

How many of your laws lie forgotten, still to be 10 reformed? What recommends a law is not the number of its years nor the dignity of its makers, but its equity and nothing else. So when laws are recognized to be unjust, they are deservedly condemned, even if they do condemn. But why do we say un- 11 just? I will go further, and, if they punish a name, I will say silly. If it is deeds they punish, why in our case do they punish deeds on the score of the name alone, while in the case of others they must have them proved not from a name but from an act committed? I am incestuous, say they; why do they not inquire into it? If it be murder of babies, why do they not torture the fact from me? I commit something against a god or a Caesar, why, when I am able to clear my character, am I not heard? No law forbids 12 the investigation of the act, of which it forbids the commission. The judge does not justly avenge, unless he knows that the unlawful act was committed; nor does the citizen faithfully obey the law, if he does not know what sort of act the law avenges. A law 13

## TERTULLIAN

tiae suae debet, sed eis a quibus obsequium expectat. Ceterum suspecta lex est quae probari se non vult, improba autem, si non probata dominetur.

- 1 V. Ut de origine aliquid retractemus eiusmodi legum, vetus erat decretum, ne qui deus ab imperatore consecraretur nisi a senatu probatus. Scit M. Aemilius de deo suo Alburno. Facit et hoc ad causam nostram, quod apud vos de humano arbitratu divinitas pensatur. Nisi homini deus placuerit, deus non erit; homo iam deo propitius esse debebit.
- 2 Tiberius ergo, cuius tempore nomen Christianum in saeculum introivit, adnuntiata sibi ex Syria Palaestina, quae illic veritatem ipsius divinitatis revelaverant, detulit ad senatum cum praerogativa suffragii sui. Senatus, quia non ipse probaverat, respuit, Caesar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusa-
- 3 toribus Christianorum. Consulite commentarios vestros, illic reperietis primum Neronem in hanc sectam cum maxime Romae orientem Caesariano gladio ferocisse. Sed tali dedicatore damnationis nostrae etiam gloriamur. Qui enim scit illum, intellegere

---

<sup>a</sup> Tertullian elsewhere refers to this episode, and Eusebius in *Hist. Eccles.* ii. 2. 4 translates this passage from "Tertullian who had an accurate knowledge of Roman Law,"<sup>b</sup> though Lawlor and Oulton in their commentary on *Hist. Eccles.* remark with surprise how little Eusebius knew of Tertullian, some of whose treatises were written in Greek. He quotes the *Apology* alone five times, in a poor translation, and mostly this chapter. They suggest that the attempt to deify Alburnus was made in 115 B.C. when M. Aemilius Scaurus and M. Caecilius Metellus were consuls, but add that nothing is known of it.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. chaps. 21, 24. On this story of Pontius Pilate, Tiberius, and the Senate, see Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xvi. (Bury's edition, vol. ii. p. 108). J. E. B. Mayor

does not owe to itself alone a sure sense of its own justice ; it owes it to those from whom it expects obedience. Contrariwise, a law is suspect which is unwilling to be examined—yes, and bad, if without such examination it tyrannizes.

V. A word of discussion on the origin of laws on this 1 matter. There was an ancient decree, that no god should be consecrated by an imperator without the approval of the Senate. M. Aemilius knows about that law in the matter of his god, Alburnus.<sup>a</sup> It bears also on our case, because among you a god's divinity depends on man's decision. Unless a god please man, he shall not be a god at all ; in fact, man must be gracious to god ! It was in the age of Tiberius, then, 2 that the Christian name went out into the world, and he referred to the Senate the news which he had received<sup>b</sup> from Syria Palestine, which had revealed the truth of Christ's (*ipsius*) divinity ; he did this exercising his prerogative in giving it his endorsement. The Senate had not approved beforehand and so rejected it. Caesar held to his opinion and threatened danger to accusers of the Christians. Consult your 3 histories. There you will find that Nero was the first to rage with the imperial sword against this school in the very hour of its rise in Rome.<sup>c</sup> But we glory—nothing less than glory—to have had such a man to inaugurate our condemnation. One who

pronounces Gibbon and others who reject the story “ wiser in their day ” than those who accepted it. It seems to have been an inference (perhaps from the ways of the Civil Service at the end of the second century) that Pilate must have written to Tiberius ; few will suppose that the document was actually seen among archives. The rest of the story would appear to be largely inference from inference, or mere guesswork.

<sup>c</sup> See Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 44. 3.

## TERTULLIAN

potest non nisi grande aliquod bonum a Nerone  
 4 damnatum. Temptaverat et Domitianus, portio  
 Neronis de crudelitate, sed qua et homo, facile  
 coeptum repressit, restitutis etiam quos relegaverat.  
 Tales semper nobis insecutores, iniusti, impii, turpes,  
 quos et ipsi damnare consuestis, a quibus damnatos  
 5 restituere soliti estis. Ceterum de tot exinde princi-  
 pibus ad hodiernum divinum humanumque sapientibus  
 edite aliquem debellatorem Christianorum !

6 At nos e contrario edimus protectorem, si litterae  
 M. Aurelii gravissimi imperatoris requirantur, quibus  
 illam Germanicam sitim Christianorum forte militum  
 precationibus impetrato imbri discussam contestatur.  
 Sicut non palam ab eiusmodi hominibus poenam  
 dimovit, ita alio modo palam dispersit, adiecta etiam  
 7 accusatoribus damnatione, et quidem tetriore. Quales  
 ergo leges istae quas adversus nos soli exercent impii,  
 iniusti, turpes, truces, vani, dementes ? quas Traianus  
 ex parte frustratus est vetando inquiri Christianos,  
 quas nullus Hadrianus, quamquam omnium curio-  
 sitatum explorator, nullus Vespasianus, quamquam  
 Iudaeorum debellator, nullus Pius, nullus Verus in-  
 8 pressit. Facilius utique pessimi ab optimis quibusque,

<sup>a</sup> Either Domitian changed his mind, or a name has dropped out, perhaps Nerva. Hegesippus, *ap.* Euseb. *Ch. Hist.* iii. 19, appears to confirm Domitian's change of mind.

<sup>b</sup> Bishop Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, vol. i. pp. 485 ff., prints the letter of Marcus Aurelius to the Senate (in Greek), and calls it a manifest forgery, which yet shows some acquaintance with the men of the time. It is an appendix to the second *Apology* of Justin. The picture given of the policy of M. Aurelius, says Lightfoot, is wholly unhistorical. Tertullian seems to be borrowing, with an unfortunate lack of criticism.

<sup>c</sup> The letter orders the accuser to be burnt alive.

<sup>d</sup> For Pliny's letter to Trajan, and Trajan's reply, see

knows Nero can understand that, unless a thing were good—and very good—it was not condemned by Nero. Domitian too, who was a good deal of a Nero 4 in cruelty, attempted it ; but, being in some degree human, he <sup>a</sup> soon stopped what he had begun, and restored those he had banished. Such are ever our persecutors—men unjust, impious, foul—men whom you yourselves are accustomed to condemn ; and those whom they condemn you have become accus- 5 tomed to restore. But from among so many emperors down to to-day, men wise in things divine and human, pick me out one who warred against the Christians !

We, however, on the other side, produce a pro- 6 tector, if you will refer to the letters of M. Aurelius, most venerable of Emperors, in which he testifies that the great drought in Germany was broken by rain obtained through the prayers of Christians, who, as it chanced, were among his soldiers.<sup>b</sup> M. Aurelius, indeed, did not openly remove the penalty from Christians, but in another way as openly he got rid of it by attaching a condemnation to their accusers, and a harsher one too.<sup>c</sup> What sort of laws, then, are those 7 which are only used against us by the impious, the unjust, the foul, the fierce, the vain, the demented ? laws which Trajan in part frustrated by forbidding Christians to be sought out,<sup>d</sup> laws which never a Hadrian, though the explorer of everything curious, enforced, never a Vespasian though he warred <sup>e</sup> against the Jews, never a Pius, never a Verus.<sup>f</sup> Yet 8

Pliny, *Epp.* x. 96, 97 ; and ch. 2. 6 of this work. The quotation is not too exact.

<sup>a</sup> Notice the recurrence of this word from above, § 5.

<sup>f</sup> Perhaps with a play on the meaning of the names.

## TERTULLIAN

ut ab aemulis, quam a suis sociis eradicandi iudicarentur.

- 1 VI. Nunc religiosissimi legum et paternorum institutorum protectores et ultores respondeant velim de sua fide et honore et obsequio erga maiorum consulta, si a nullo desciverunt, si in nullo exorbitaverunt, si non necessaria et aptissima quaeque disciplinae oblitteraverunt. Quonam illae leges abierunt sumptum et ambitionem comprimentes? quae centum aera non amplius in coenam subscribi iubebant nec amplius quam unam inferri gallinam, et eam non saginatam, quae patricium, quod decem pondo argenti habuisset, pro magno ambitionis titulo senatu submovebant, quae theatra stuprandis moribus orientia statim destruebant, quae dignitatum et honestorum natalium insignia non temere nec inpune usurpari sinebant?
- 3 Video enim et centenarias coenas a centenis iam sestertiis dicendas, et in lances (parum est si senatorum et non libertinorum vel adhuc flagra rumpentium) argentaria metalla producta. Video et theatra nec singula satis esse nec nuda; nam ne vel hieme voluptas inpudica frigeret, primi Lacedaemonii penulam ludis excogitaverunt. Video et inter matronas atque prostibulas nullum de habitu discrimen
- 4 relictum. Circa feminas quidem etiam illa maiorum

---

<sup>a</sup> A quotation of the current condemnation of the Christians. His sense is that, if the Christians were, as men call them, the worst of men, then naturally it would be the best of men (like the good Emperors named) who would seek to destroy them, and not such persons as Nero, who are much of a muchness with the worst of men.

<sup>b</sup> Slaves on whom whips were broken. Cf. Juvenal, vi. 479 "hic frangit ferulas."

<sup>c</sup> The Spartans invented their cloak for military service, but the reader of Tertullian soon learns to expect irony.



I should think "the worst of men"<sup>a</sup> might more easily be judged worthy of extermination by the best of men—their enemies, you might say—rather than by their fellows!

VI. But now I will ask those most religious protectors and maintainers of laws and ancestral usages to answer as to their loyalty, as to the honour and obedience they render to the decrees of their ancestors—if they have abandoned none of them—if in nothing they have deviated from them—if they have not obliterated matters necessary to discipline and most proper to it. Where have those laws gone that limit luxury and ostentation? the laws that forbade more than 100 *asses* to be allowed for a banquet or more than one fowl to be set on the table, and that fowl not fattened either? the laws that dealt with a patrician because he had ten pounds weight of silver plate, and, on the grave indictment of aspiring too high, removed him from the Senate? the laws which, when theatres first rose for the depravation of morals, at once destroyed them? the laws which did not allow the insignia of rank and honourable birth to be lightly used or with impunity? For I see "centenary" banquets, so-called from the 100,000 sesterces they cost. I see—it would be little if it were the work of senators and not of freedmen or of whip-spoilers<sup>b</sup>—I see whole silver-mines turned into dishes. I see theatres—and a single theatre here or there will not suffice—not uncovered, either. For—oh! it was for the games that the Spartans first invented the cloak,<sup>c</sup> in case unclean pleasure should be cold in winter! I see, between matrons and harlots, not a vestige of distinction in dress left. Really, as regards women, the usages of our ancestors have lapsed that

## TERTULLIAN

- instituta ceciderunt quae modestiae, quae sobrietati patrocina-  
bantur, cum aurum nulla norat praeter unico digito quem sponsus obpignorasset pronubo anulo, cum mulieres usque adeo vino abstinerentur, ut matronam ob resignatos cellae vinariae loculos sui inedia necarint, sub Romulo vero quae vinum attigerat, inpune a Metennio marito trucidata sit.
- 5 Idcirco et oscula propinquis offerre etiam necessitas  
6 erat, ut spiritu iudicarentur. Ubi est illa felicitas matrimoniorum de moribus utique prosperata, qua per annos ferme sexcentos ab urbe condita nulla repudium domus scripsit? At nunc in feminis prae auro nullum leve est membrum, prae vino nullum liberum est osculum, repudium vero iam et votum est, quasi matrimonii fructus.
- 7 Etiam circa ipsos deos vestros quae prospere decreverant patres vestri, idem vos obsequentissimi rescidistis. Liberum Patrem cum mysteriis suis consules senatus auctoritate non modo urbe, sed universa  
8 Italia eliminauerunt. Serapidem et Isidem et Arpocratem cum suo cynocephalo Capitolio prohibitos inferri, id est curia deorum pulsos, Piso et Gabinius consules non utique Christiani eversis etiam aris eorum abdicaverunt, turpium et otiosarum superstitionum vitia cohibentes. His vos restitutis summam  
9 maiestatem contulistis. Ubi religio, ubi veneratio maioribus debita a vobis? Habitu, victu, instructu, sensu, ipso denique sermone proavis renuntiastis.

---

<sup>a</sup> Harpocrates is Har-pe-khrot, "Horus the child," a plump sucking infant—"no god was closer to the heart of the people"; Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion* (tr.), pp. 218-225, with pictures of the child-god riding now a goose and now a ram. Cf. p. 382 n.

<sup>b</sup> i.e., Anubis.

protected modesty or sobriety, when no woman knew gold save on one finger, which her betrothed pledged to himself with the engagement ring ; when women abstained so entirely from wine that when a matron once unlocked the wine cellar, her family made her starve to death. Why, under Romulus, a woman who had touched wine was killed with impunity by Metennius her husband. That was why they were 5 compelled to offer to kiss their relatives—that they might be judged by their breath. Where is that 6 happiness of marriage, so prospered I think by morals, that, in the six hundred years following the foundation of Rome, no house registered a divorce ? But nowadays among women no limb of the body but is heavy with gold ; wine forbids the free kiss ; divorce—divorce by now is prayed for, as if it were the proper sequel of marriage.

To come next to your gods themselves, the decrees 7 which your fathers prudently enacted, you, the most law-abiding of men, have repealed. Father Bacchus and his mysteries,—the consuls with the approval of the Senate turned him not only out of the City but out of the whole of Italy. Serapis and Isis and Harpo- 8 crates<sup>a</sup> with his Dog-head<sup>b</sup> were forbidden the Capitol—in other words, expelled from the Assembly of the gods ; and Piso and Gabinius—consuls, not Christians, I think—actually overturned their altars and banished them, in the endeavour to restrain the vices that go with foul and idle superstitions. You have restored them and bestowed on them supreme majesty. Where is the religious awe, where is the 9 veneration owed by you to your ancestors ? In dress, habit of life, furniture, feeling, yes ! and speech, you have renounced your great-grandfathers ! You are

## TERTULLIAN

Laudatis semper antiquitatem, et nove de die vivitis. Per quod ostenditur, dum a bonis maiorum institutis deceditis, ea vos retinere et custodire quae non  
 10 debuistis, cum quae debuistis non custodistis. Ipsum adhuc quod videmini fidelissime tueri, a patribus traditum, in quo principaliter reos transgressionis Christianos destinastis, studium dico deorum colendorum, de quo maxime erravit antiquitas, licet Serapidi iam Romano aras restruxeritis, licet Baccho iam Italico furias vestras immoletis, suo loco ostendam proinde despici et neglegi et destrui a vobis adversus  
 11 maiorum auctoritatem. Nunc enim ad illam occultorum facinorum infamiam respondebo, ut viam mihi ad manifestiora purgem.

1 VII. Dicimur sceleratissimi de sacramento infanticidii et pabulo inde, et post convivium incesto, quod eversores luminum canes, lenones scilicet tenebrarum, libidinum impiarum in verecundiam<sup>1</sup> procurent. Dicimur tamen semper, nec vos quod tam diu dicimur eruere curatis. Ergo aut eruite, si creditis, aut nolite  
 2 credere, qui non eruistis. De vestra vobis dissimu-

---

<sup>1</sup> in verecundiam is a correction made by Oehler, who explains that the dogs verecundiae consuluisse by bringing darkness upon the scene. This text I have tried to render, without much conviction. Kellner calls the passage a crux interpretum. Every reader may try his hand at it. An *et* for the comma after tenebrarum, a comma at impiarum, and inverecundiam in one word, are suggested.

<sup>a</sup> To a question that has been raised as to the point of this parenthesis, the answer is given in his treatment of the gods (chs. 10, 11): antiquity never blundered so badly as in its selection of gods.

<sup>b</sup> The more conspicuous crimes are dealt with in ch. 10. Cf. ch. 9. 20.

for ever praising antiquity, and every day you improve some new way of life. All of which goes to prove that, while you abandon the good usages of your ancestors, you keep and maintain the practices you should not have, and what you should have kept you have not maintained. In fact, as to that very point 10 of ancestral tradition, which you think you most faithfully guard, which above all else you have used to mark down the Christians as law-breakers,—I mean the passion for worshipping the gods, (and that is where antiquity made its worst mistake<sup>a</sup>)—though you may have rebuilt his altars for Serapis Romanized, though you may make an offering of your frenzy to Bacchus Italianate—I will show in its proper place that you despise, neglect and destroy that tradition, clean against the authority of your ancestors. For 11 the moment I will make my reply to the infamy of our secret crimes, to clear my way to deal with those which are more conspicuous.<sup>b</sup>

VII. We are said to be the most criminal of men, 1 on the score of our sacramental baby-killing and the baby-eating that goes with it and the incest that follows the banquet, where the dogs<sup>c</sup> are our pimps in the dark, forsooth, and make a sort of decency for guilty lusts by overturning the lamps. That, at all events, is what you always say about us; and yet you take no pains to bring into the daylight what you have been saying about us all this long time. Then, I say, either bring it out, if you believe all this, or refuse to believe it after leaving it uninvestigated. Your habit of looking the other way 2

<sup>c</sup> The dogs were supposed to be tied to the candles; food thrown to them; and the sudden movement made the room dark.

## TERTULLIAN

latione praescribitur non esse quod nec ipsi audetis eruere. Longe aliud munus carnifici in Christianos imperatis, non ut dicant quae faciunt, sed ut negent  
3 quod sunt. Census istius disciplinae, ut iam edidimus, a Tiberio est. Cum odio sui coepit veritas. Simul atque apparuit, inimica est. Tot hostes eius quot extranei, et quidem proprie ex aemulatione Iudaei, ex concussione milites, ex natura ipsi etiam  
4 domestici nostri. Cotidie obsidemur, cotidie prodimur, in ipsis plurimum coetibus et congregationibus  
5 nostris opprimimur. Quis umquam taliter vagienti infanti supervenit? Quis cruenta, ut invenerat, Cyclopum et Sirenum ora iudici reservavit? Quis vel in uxoribus aliqua immunda vestigia deprehendit? Quis talia facinora cum invenisset, celavit aut vendidit ipsos trahens homines? Si semper latemus, quando proditum est quod admittimus?  
6 Immo a quibus prodi potuit? Ab ipsis enim reis non utique, cum vel ex forma omnibus mysteriis silentii fides debeatur. Samothracia et Eleusinia reticentur, quanto magis talia quae prodita interim etiam humanam animadversionem provocabunt, dum divina  
7 servatur? Si ergo non ipsi proditores sui, sequitur ut extranei. Et unde extraneis notitia, cum semper

---

<sup>a</sup> Some take *domestici* to be slaves, natural enemies of their masters. It may be right; but the translation given above has some support from ch. 3. 4.

<sup>b</sup> *i.e.*, was bribed into silence.

## APOLOGETICUS, VII. 2-7

constitutes a demurrer in the case, a presumption that the thing is not there at all, which not even you yourselves dare to try to bring out. It is quite a different task that you enjoin on the executioner against the Christians,—not to make them say what they do, but deny what they are.

This way of life dates, as we have already said, 3 from the reign of Tiberius. Truth and hatred of truth start together ; as soon as it has appeared, it begins to be disliked. Count the outsiders, and you count its enemies—the Jews its proper enemies from rivalry, the soldiers for blackmail, while it is nature itself that makes the home circle our enemies.<sup>a</sup> Every day 4 we stand siege ; every day we are betrayed ; above all in our gatherings and our assemblies we are surprised. Who yet, I ask, came upon a baby wailing, 5 as they say ? Who ever kept for the judge's sight the jaws of Cyclops and Siren, bloodstained as he had found them ? Who, again, found in our wives the traces of impurity ? Who discovered such crimes and concealed them, or sold his discovery,<sup>b</sup> with his hands on the persons of the guilty ? If we always escape detection, when was our wicked conduct betrayed ?

Yes, tell me, by whom the betrayal could have 6 been made ? Not, I should think, by the guilty themselves ; since in all mysteries the very fact that they are mysteries requires the pledge of silence. The mysteries of Samothrace and Eleusis remain unspoken. How much more such mysteries as these, whose betrayal will provoke man's vengeance at once, with God's in reserve ? Well, if 7 they are not their own betrayers, it follows that outsiders must betray them. And where do the outsiders get their information, when initiations, even pious

## TERTULLIAN

etiam piae initiationes arceant profanos et arbitris caveant? Nisi si impii minus metuunt.

- 8 Natura famae omnibus nota est. Vestrum est :  
Fama malum qua non aliud velocius ullum. Cur  
malum fama? quia velox? quia index? an quia plurimum mendax? quae ne tunc quidem, cum aliquid veri  
adfert, sine mendacii vitio est, detrahens, adiciens,  
9 demutans de veritate. Quid? quod ea illi condicio  
est, ut non nisi cum mentitur perseveret et tamdiu  
vivit quamdiu non probat, siquidem, ubi probavit,  
cessat esse et quasi officio nuntiandi functa rem tradit,  
10 et exinde res tenetur, res nominatur. Nec quisquam  
dicit verbi gratia, Hoc Romae aiunt factum, aut,  
Fama est illum provinciam sortitum, sed, Sortitus est  
11 ille provinciam, et, Hoc factum est Romae. Fama,  
nomen incerti, locum non habet ubi certum est. An  
vero famae credat nisi inconsideratus? Quia sapiens  
non credit incerto. Omnium est aestimare, quanta-  
cunque illa ambitione diffusa sit, quantacunque  
asseveratione constructa, quod ab uno aliquando  
12 principe exorta sit necesse est. Exinde in traduces  
linguarum et aurium serpit, et ita modici seminis  
vitium cetera rumoris obscurat, ut nemo recogitet, ne  
primum illud os mendacium seminaverit, quod saepe

---

Virgil, *Aen.* iv. 174.



## APOLOGETICUS, VII. 7-12

ones, always bid the profane avaunt, and guard against observers? Or do you suggest that the impious are less afraid?

Everybody knows the nature of Rumour. It is 8 in your literature :

Rumour, a curse, and swiftest of all curses.<sup>a</sup>

Why is Rumour a curse? Because she is swift? Because she is an informer? Or because she is generally a liar? Why, Rumour, even when she does bring a bit of truth, does not quite escape from her vice of lying; she subtracts from the Truth, adds to it, alters it. What? Surely the terms of her existence are 9 that she only survives while she lies, and only lives so long as she fails to prove her tale. When she has proved it, she ceases to be Rumour; and, as if she had completed her task of telling, she gives us fact; and, after that, it is fact that is held, and fact it is called; 10 nor does anybody say, for example, "They say this occurred at Rome," or "Rumour is that so and so is assigned the province," but "He has been assigned the province" and "This did occur in Rome." Rumour, a synonym for the uncertain, has no place 11 where there is certainty. Would anybody believe Rumour, except the unthinking? The wise man does not believe uncertainty. It lies with everybody to reflect that, however widely Rumour has been put about, with whatever assurance it has been contrived, it must necessarily have originated at some moment with some single person who started it. After 12 that it creeps through ramifications of tongues and ears; and something wrong in the little seed, whence it sprang, so obscures all else in the rumour, that no one reflects whether that first mouth sowed the lie, as

## TERTULLIAN

fit aut ingenio aemulationis aut arbitrio suspicionis aut non nova sed ingenita quibusdam mentiendi  
13 voluptate. Bene autem quod omnia tempus revelat, testibus etiam vestris proverbiiis atque sententiis, ex dispositione naturae, quae ita ordinavit, ut nihil diu lateat, etiam quod fama non distulit. Merito igitur fama tamdiu conscia sola est scelerum Christianorum. Hanc indicem adversus nos profertis, quae quod aliquando iactavit tantoque spatio in opinionem corroboravit usque adhuc probare non valuit, ut fidem naturae ipsius appellem adversus eos qui talia credenda esse praesumunt.

- 1 VIII. Ecce proponimus horum facinorum mercedem. Vitam aeternam repromittunt. Credite interim. De hoc enim quaero, an et qui credideris  
2 tanti habeas ad eam tali conscientia pervenire. Veni, demerge ferrum in infantem nullius inimicum, nullius reum, omnium filium, vel, si alterius officium est, tu modo adsiste morienti homini antequam vixit, fugientem animam novam expecta, excipe rudem sanguinem, eo panem tuum satia, vescere libenter.  
3 Intereadiscumbens dinumera loca, ubi mater, ubi soror; nota diligenter, ut, cum tenebrae ceciderint caninae, non erres. Piaculum enim admiseris nisi incestum  
4 feceris. Talia initiatus et consignatus vivis in aevum. Cupio respondeas, si tanti aeternitas. Aut si non,

---

See p. 242 note *a*.

often happens, from an envious nature, from wanton suspicion, or from that mere pleasure in lying which with some people is no new thing but inborn in them. It is well that time reveals all, as your own proverbs and wise saws witness, and does it by the law of nature, which has so ordained that nothing long lies hid, even when Rumour has not flung it abroad. Very properly, 13 then, Rumour alone all this long time is the authority for the crimes of the Christians. Rumour is the informer you bring forward against us. Yet what she once launched and in all this interval has hardened into general belief, to this hour she has not been able to prove: So I would appeal to the authority of Nature herself to give evidence against those who assume such charges to be credible.

VIII. Look, then; we offer a reward for these 1 crimes; they promise eternal life! For the moment believe it. Then I ask a question on this point—whether even you, sir, who have believed it, count eternal life worth winning at such a price, with all this on your conscience? Come! plunge the knife into the baby, 2 nobody's enemy, guilty of nothing, everybody's child; or, if that is the other man's job, do you just stand by (that is all), by this human creature dying before it has lived; watch for the young soul as it escapes; catch the infant blood; steep your bread with it; eat and enjoy it. Meanwhile, as you recline on your 3 couch, reckon the places where your mother, your sister, may be; make a careful note so that, when the darkness of the dogs' contriving shall fall, you can make no mistake. You will be guilty of a sin, unless you have committed incest. So initiated, so 4 sealed,<sup>a</sup> you live for ever. I wish you to answer: Is eternity worth it? Or if it is not, then you must not

## TERTULLIAN

- ideo nec credenda. Etiam si credideris, nego te velle; etiam si volueris, nego te posse. Cur ergo alii possint, si vos non potestis? cur non possitis, si alii possunt?
- 5 Alia nos, opinor, natura; Cynopaene aut Sciapodes? Alii ordines dentium, alii ad incestam libidinem nervi? Qui ista credis de homine, potes et facere. Homo es et ipse, quod et Christianus. Qui non potes facere, non debes credere. Homo est enim et Christianus et quod et tu.
- 6 Sed ignorantibus subicitur et inponitur. Nihil enim tale de Christianis asseverari sciebant observandum
- 7 utique sibi et omni vigilantia investigandum. Atqui volentibus initiari moris est, opinor, prius patrem illum sacrorum adire, quae praeparanda sint describere. Tum ille: Infans tibi necessarius adhuc tener, qui nesciat mortem, qui sub cultro tuo rideat; item panis, quo sanguinis iurulentiam<sup>1</sup> colligas; praeterea candelabra et lucernae et canes aliqui et offulae, quae illos ad eversionem luminum extendant: ante
- 8 omnia cum matre et sorore tua venire debebis. Quid si noluerint vel nullae fuerint? quid denique singulares Christiani? Non erit, opinor, legitimus Christianus nisi frater aut filius. Quid nunc, et si ista omnia ignaris praeparantur? Certe postea cognos-
- 9 cunt et sustinent et ignoscunt. Timent plecti, si

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler prints* virulentiam.

---

<sup>a</sup> These pleasant people are found in Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 2. 23, who quotes Ctesias as authority for a population somewhere of 120,000 dog-headed, and for the Sciapods, "quod in maiore aestu humi iacentes resupini umbra se pedum protegunt." Herodotus, iv. 191, refers to dog-headed men, but implies they are fabulous. See Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, 45. So down through history from Sir John Mandeville to Othello.

believe the tales. Even if you have believed, I deny that you wish it [at the price]; even if you should wish it, I deny that you could *do* the thing. Then how can others do it, if you cannot? Why can't you, if others can? Oh, we have another nature, I suppose! 5 Dog-headed men, perhaps, or Sciapods? <sup>a</sup> A different arrangement of teeth, other muscles for incestuous lust? You, sir, who believe this of any man, you can do it just as easily as believe it. You are a man yourself, and that is just what a Christian is. You, sir, who cannot do the thing, ought not to believe it of another. For a Christian too is a man, and exactly what you are.

"But, of course, the ignorant are trapped into it; 6 the trick is played on them. For they never knew that any such thing is asserted of Christians,—nothing that they should look into, nothing to investigate with all watchfulness." Yet when men seek initiation, 7 the usual thing, I suppose, is first to approach the "father" of the ritual, to map out what is to be prepared. Then quoth he: "You must have a baby, still tender, that can know nothing of death, that can smile under your knife; *item* a loaf, to catch its juicy blood; add lampstands and lamps, a dog or two, and some sops to set the dogs tumbling the lamps over; above all, you must come with your mother and sister." But if they won't come, or 8 if you have none? What, Christians with *no* relatives? I suppose, a man is not a regular Christian unless he is a brother or a son. "But, look! what if all this is made ready for people who know nothing about it?" At all events they know afterwards, and bear up under it, and forgive it. "They are afraid 9 of punishment, if they were to tell the story." They

## TERTULLIAN

proclament, qui defendi merebuntur, qui etiam ultro perire malint quam sub tali conscientia vivere. Age nunc timeant, cur etiam perseverant? Sequitur enim, ne ultra velis id te esse quod, si prius scisses, non fuisses.

- 1 IX. Haec quo magis refutaverim, a vobis fieri ostendam partim in aperto, partim in occulto, per
- 2 quod forsitan et de nobis credidistis. Infantes penes Africam Saturno immolabantur palam usque ad proconsulatum Tiberii, qui eosdem sacerdotes in eisdem arboribus templi sui obumbratricibus scelerum votivis crucibus exposuit, teste militia patriae nostrae, quae
- 3 id ipsum munus illi proconsuli functa est. Sed et nunc in occulto perseveratur hoc sacrum facinus. Non soli vos contemnunt Christiani, nec ullum scelus in perpetuum eradicatur aut mores suos aliqui deus
- 4 mutat. Cum propriis filiis Saturnus non pepercit, extraneis utique non parcendo perseverabat, quos quidem ipsi parentes sui offerebant et libentes respondebant et infantibus blandiebantur, ne lacrimantes immolarentur. Et tamen multum homicidio parri-
- 5 cidium differt. Maior aetas apud Gallos Mercurio prosecatur. Remitto fabulas Tauricas theatri suis.

---

<sup>a</sup> i.e., as victims of such trickery, or as informers against such crimes.

<sup>b</sup> J. E. B. Mayor cites Plato, *Minos*, 315 B-C, on Carthaginian sacrifices of children to Kronos; Varro too, quoted by Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, vii. 19.

<sup>c</sup> Since Joseph Scaliger's days it has been discussed what Tiberius this was, and when was his proconsulate, or whether emendation might solve the problem. In the absence of exact knowledge from other sources, the translation is questioned, but the translators generally agree on the treatment of the priests, though the Latin is perplexing.

<sup>d</sup> A reference to Carthage, and half a hint that it was some recent proconsul Tiberius; so Mayor.

## TERTULLIAN

Ecce in illa religiosissima urbe Aeneadarum piorum est Iupiter quidam quem ludis suis humano sanguine proluunt. Sed bestiarii, inquitis. Hoc, opinor, minus quam hominis? An hoc turpius, quod mali hominis? certe tamen de homicidio funditur. O Iovem Christianum et solum patris filium de crudelitate! Sed quoniam de infanticidio nihil interest sacro an arbitrio perpetretur, licet parricidium homicidio intersit, convertar ad populum.

Quot vultis ex his circumstantibus et in Christianorum sanguinem hiantibus, ex ipsis etiam vobis iustissimis et severissimis in nos praesidibus apud conscientias pulsem, qui natos sibi liberos enecent? Siquidem et de genere necis differt, utique crudelius in aqua spiritum extorquetis aut frigori et fami et canibus exponitis. Ferro enim mori aetas quoque maior optaverit. Nobis vero semel homicidio interdicto etiam conceptum utero, dum adhuc sanguis in hominem delibatur, dissolvere non licet. Homicidii festinatio est prohibere nasci, nec refert natam quis eripiat animam an nascentem disturbet. Homo est et qui est futurus; etiam fructus omnis iam in semine est.

---

<sup>a</sup> Compare the phrase describing Domitian and his likeness to Nero, ch. 5. 4. The rendering "the only son of his father, because of his cruelty" (viz. Saturn's cruelty in eating the rest of his children) is suggested, but seems less probable.

<sup>b</sup> One feels that the saving clause may have an irony: of course, it is not so dreadful if it is your own child.

<sup>c</sup> The exposure of infants, especially of girls, is constantly hurled at the heathen by apologists. We do not, says Clement of Alexandria, cast out our children and keep parrots. The frequency with which the *dénouement* of a comedy turns on these exposures, with other evidence, con-

look you ! in that most religious of all cities, the city of the pious race of Aeneas, is a certain Jupiter, whom they drench with human blood at his own games. "Yes, but only the blood of a man condemned already to the beasts," you say ? That, I take it, makes it something less than a man's blood ? Or may it not be so much worse because the blood of a bad man ? At all events it is at least the blood of murder. What a Christian Jove, to be sure, his father's only son so far as cruelty goes !<sup>a</sup> But since 6 there is no difference as to baby-killing whether you do it as a sacred rite or just because you choose to do it (though we must grant a difference between murder and killing your own child <sup>b</sup>), I will turn to the people.

How many, think you, of these persons standing round and panting for Christian blood,—how many of you, most just magistrates and most severe upon us, how many should I touch in their consciences for killing their own children, born to them ? Since 7 there is a difference between one kind of death and another, surely your way is more cruel, to choke out the breath in water, or to expose to cold, starvation and the dogs.<sup>c</sup> Grown-up people would sooner die by iron. For us murder is once for all forbidden ; so even 8 the child in the womb, while yet the mother's blood is still being drawn on to form the human being, it is not lawful for us to destroy. To forbid birth is only quicker murder. It makes no difference whether one take away the life once born or destroy it as it comes to birth. He is a man, who is to be a man ; the fruit is always present in the seed.

firms the charge. The papyrus letter of Hilarion to Alis (A.D. 1) is well known ; "If it was a girl, put it out."



## TERTULLIAN

- 9 De sanguinis pabulo et eiusmodi tragicis ferculis legite, necubi relatum sit (est apud Herodotum, opinor), defusum brachiis sanguinem ex alterutro degustatum nationes quasdam foederi comparasse. Nescio quid et sub Catilina degustatum est. Aiunt et apud quosdam gentiles Scytharum defunctum
- 10 quemque a suis comedi. Longe excurro. Hodie istic Bellonae sacratus sanguis de femore proscisso in palmulam exceptus et esui datus signat.<sup>1</sup> Item illi qui munere in arena noxiorum iugulatorum sanguinem recentem de iugulo decurrentem exceptum avida siti
- 11 comitali morbo medentes auferunt, ubi sunt? Item illi qui de arena ferinis obsoniis coenant, qui de apro, qui de cervo petunt? Aper ille quem cruentavit, conluctando deterisit. Cervus ille in gladiatoris sanguine iacuit. Ipsorum ursorum alvei appetuntur cruditantes adhuc de visceribus humanis. Ructatur
- 12 proinde ab homine caro pasta de homine. Haec qui editis, quantum abestis a conviviis Christianorum? Minus autem et illi faciunt qui libidine fera humanis membris inhiant, quia vivos vorant? minus humano sanguine ad spurcitiam consecrantur, quia futurum sanguinem lambunt? Non edunt infantes plane, sed magis puberes.
- 13 Erubescat error vester Christianis, qui ne animalium quidem sanguinem in epulis esculentis habemus, qui propterea suffocatis quoque et morticinis abstinemus, ne quo modo sanguine contaminemur vel intra viscera

<sup>1</sup> *Text uncertain; whether sacratus or sacratos, esui or suis; palmulam or parmulam. The translation is a compromise.*

<sup>a</sup> Herodotus, iv. 70.

<sup>b</sup> Sallust, *Catiline*, 22.

As to tasting blood, and such like tragic dishes, 9  
 read—wherever it may be told (it is in Herodotus,<sup>a</sup>  
 I think)—how some tribes have used blood drawn  
 from the arms of both parties and taste it to  
 seal a treaty. Something of the kind was tasted in  
 Catiline's plot.<sup>b</sup> They say, too, that among some  
 tribesmen of Scythian stock every dead man is eaten  
 by his kindred.<sup>c</sup> But I go too far afield. To-day 10  
 and here, when men are dedicated to Bellona, the  
 thigh is cut, the blood is caught in a little shield,<sup>d</sup>  
 and given them to consume—as a sign. Again,  
 those who, when a show is given in the arena,  
 with greedy thirst have caught the fresh blood of the  
 guilty slain, as it pours fresh from their throats, and  
 carry it off as a cure for their epilepsy<sup>e</sup>—what of  
 them? Again, those who dine on the flesh of wild 11  
 animals from the arena, keen on the meat of boar  
 or stag? That boar in his battle has wiped the blood  
 off him whose blood he drew; that stag has wallowed  
 in the blood of a gladiator. The bellies of the very  
 bears are sought, full of raw and undigested human  
 flesh. Man's flesh goes belching, fattened on man's  
 flesh. You who eat these things, how far are you 12  
 from those Christian banquets?

Let your error blush<sup>f</sup> before the Christians, for we 13  
 do not include even animals' blood in our natural  
 diet. We abstain on that account from things  
 strangled or that die of themselves, that we may  
 not in any way be polluted by blood, even if it is

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Herodotus, i. 216, the Massagetai eat the aged; iv. 26, the Issedones eat the dead.

<sup>d</sup> Or "in the hand."

<sup>e</sup> Cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 1 (2).

<sup>f</sup> In less rhetorical language, "blush for your unnatural practices in eating."

## TERTULLIAN

- 14 sepulto. Denique inter temptamenta Christianorum  
 botulos etiam cruore distensos admovetis, certissimi  
 scilicet illicitum esse penes illos per quod exorbitare  
 eos vultis. Porro quale est, ut quos sanguinem pecoris  
 horrere confiditis, humano inhiare credatis, nisi forte  
 15 suaviorem eum experti? Quem quidem et ipsum  
 proinde examinatorem Christianorum adhiberi oportebat  
 ut foculum, ut acerram. Proinde enim probarentur  
 sanguinem humanum adpetendo quemadmodum sacrificium  
 respuendo, alioquin negandi si non gustassent, quemadmodum  
 si immolassent, et utique non deesset vobis in auditione  
 custodiarum et damnatione sanguis humanus.<sup>1</sup>
- 16 Proinde incesti qui magis quam quos ipse Iupiter  
 docuit? Persas cum suis matribus misceri Ctesias refert.  
 Sed et Macedones suspecti, quia, cum primum Oedipum  
 tragoediam audissent, ridentes incesti dolo-  
 17 rem, "Ηλαυνε, dicebant, εἰς τὴν μητέρα. Iam nunc  
 recogitate quantum liceat erroribus ad incesta miscenda,  
 suppeditante materias passivitate luxuriae. Imprimis  
 filios exponitis suscipiendos ab aliqua praeter-eunte  
 misericordia extranea, vel adoptandos melioribus  
 parentibus emancipatis. Alienati generis necesse est  
 quandoque memoriam dissipari, et simul error in-  
 18 pente genere cum scelere. Tunc deinde quocunque  
 in loco, domi, peregre, trans freta comes est libido,  
 cuius ubique saltus facile possunt alicubi ignaris

<sup>1</sup> *The text varies, necandi or negandi, with the negatives rearranged.*

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Acts xv. 20, 29.

buried in the meat.<sup>a</sup> Finally, when you are testing 14  
 Christians, you offer them sausages full of blood ;  
 you are thoroughly well aware, of course, that  
 among them it is forbidden ; but you want to make  
 them transgress. Now, I ask you, what sort of a thing  
 is it, that when you are confident they will turn with  
 horror from animals' blood, you should suppose them  
 greedy for human blood—unless perhaps you your-  
 selves have found it sweeter ? Human blood then 15  
 ought to be used as an extra test with the Christians,  
 like the brazier and incense-box. They would be con-  
 victed as much by their eagerness for human blood  
 as by their refusal of sacrifice, and acquitted if they  
 did not taste it, just as they would be if they had  
 sacrificed. And when your prisoners were being  
 tried and condemned, there would, I am very sure,  
 be no shortage of human blood.

Then again who are more incestuous than the 16  
 disciples of Jupiter ? The Persians according to  
 Ctesias consort with their mothers. And the Mace-  
 donians are suspected of it too, because when first  
 they heard the tragedy of *Oedipus*, they laughed  
 at his grief for the incest ; “ he lay with Jocasta,”  
 they said. Yet now reflect how far error may go in 17  
 promoting incest, as your promiscuous wantonness  
 offers occasion. To begin, you expose your children  
 to be taken up by the pity of any stray outsider who  
 passes—or (shall we say ?) you release them to be  
 adopted by better parents. When the family is  
 discarded, sometimes memory must be lost ; and when  
 once mistake strikes in, then a strain of incest will  
 continue as stock and sin creep on together. Then, 18  
 in the next instance, whatever the spot, at home,  
 abroad, across the sea, lust goes with you, whose sallies

## TERTULLIAN

filios pangere vel ex aliqua seminis portione, ut ita sparsum genus per commercia humana concurrat in memorias suas, neque eas caecus incesti sanguinis agnoscat.<sup>1</sup>

19 Nos ab isto eventu diligentissima et, fidelissima castitas sepsit, quantumque ab stupris et ab omni post matrimonium excessu, tantum et ab incesti casu tuti sumus. Quidam multo securiores totam vim huius erroris virgine continentia depellunt, senes  
20 pueri. Haec in vobis esse si consideraretis, proinde in Christianis non esse perspiceretis. Idem oculi renuntiassent utrumque. Sed caecitatis duae species facile concurrunt, ut qui non vident quae sunt, videre videantur quae non sunt. Sic per omnia ostendam. Nunc de manifestioribus dicam.

1 X. Deos, inquit, non colitis, et pro imperatoribus sacrificia non penditis. Sequitur ut eadem ratione pro aliis non sacrificemus, quia nec pro nobis ipsis, semel deos non colendo. Itaque sacrilegii et maiestatis rei convenimur. Summa haec causa, immo tota est, et utique digna cognosci, si non praesumptio aut iniquitas iudicet, altera quae desperat, altera quae  
2 recusat veritatem. Deos vestros colere desinimus ex quo illos non esse cognoscimus. Hoc igitur exigere debetis, uti probemus non esse illos deos, et idcirco

<sup>1</sup> So Oehler, following the mss. He says caecus is equivalent to ignarus and is to be construed with the genitive. One is to suppose some noun or pronoun, representing a man, understood. Or the text can be changed. coetus is also read for caecus, and there are other variants.

---

<sup>a</sup> Kellner takes it as "old men and young alike."

<sup>b</sup> The Ante-Nicene Christian Library translator puts it that prejudice has no idea of discovering the truth while injustice simply and at once rejects it.

may in every place beget you children without your knowing it ; a very little of the seed will do it ; so that a stock scattered through the range of human travel may fall in with its own source, and, all unaware, fail to recognize an incestuous union.

From such an event we are guarded by a chastity, 19 supremely careful and faithful ; we are safe from random intercourse and from all excess after marriage, and in that degree from the risk of incest. Some indeed, in a much greater security, guard themselves against the violence of this sin by a virgin continence, old in years but still children.<sup>a</sup> If you 20 would realize that these sins are found among yourselves, you would see that they are not to be found among the Christians. The same eyes would assure you of both facts. But two sorts of blindness easily meet, so that those, who do not see what is really there, seem to see what is not. So in all the points at issue, as I will show you. But now of our more conspicuous crimes !

X. “ You do not,” say you “ worship the gods ; 1 you do not offer sacrifice for the Emperors.” It follows by parity of reasoning that we do not sacrifice for others because we do not for ourselves—it follows from our not worshipping the gods. So we are accused of sacrilege and treason at once. That is the chief of the case against us—the whole of it, in fact ; and it in any case deserves investigation, unless the judgement is to be given by prejudice or injustice, the one despairing of the truth, the other refusing it.<sup>b</sup> Your gods, then, we cease to worship, 2 from the moment when we recognize that they are not gods. So that is what you ought to require us to prove—that those gods are not gods and are there-

## TERTULLIAN

non colendos, quia tunc demum coli debuissent, si dei fuissent. Tunc et Christiani puniendi, si quos non colerent, quia putarent non esse, constaret illos deos esse.

3 Sed nobis, inquit, dei sunt. Appellamus et provocamus a vobis ad conscientiam vestram : illa nos iudicet, illa nos damnet, si poterit negare omnes  
4 istos deos vestros homines fuisse. Si et ipsa inficias ierit, de suis antiquitatum instrumentis revincetur, de quibus eos didicit, testimonium perhibentibus ad hodiernum et civitatibus in quibus nati sunt, et regionibus in quibus aliquid operati vestigia relique-  
5 runt, in quibus etiam sepulti demonstrantur. Nunc ergo per singulos decurram, tot ac tantos, novos, veteres, barbaros, Graecos, Romanos, peregrinos, captivos, adoptivos, proprios, communes, masculos, feminas, rusticos, urbanos, nauticos, militares ? Otiosum et etiam titulos persequi, ut colligam in compendium, et hoc non quo cognoscatis, sed reco-  
6 gnoscatis. Certe enim oblitos agitis. Ante Saturnum deus penes vos nemo est, ab illo census totius vel potioris et notioris divinitatis. Itaque quod de origine  
7 constiterit, id et de posteritate conveniet. Saturnum itaque, si quantum litterae docent, neque Diodorus Graecus aut Thallus neque Cassius Severus aut Cornelius Nepos neque ullus commentator eiusmodi antiquitatum aliud quam hominem promulgaverunt,

---

<sup>a</sup> For the theory, associated with the name of Euhemerus, that the gods had once been men, see Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, i. 42. 119 "qui aut fortes aut claros aut potentes viros tradunt post mortem ad deos pervenisse," with a reference to Ennius translating Euhemerus.

<sup>b</sup> viz., stories and origins of the gods. For these authors cf. p. 374 n.

fore not to be worshipped ; because it is only if they had been gods that they should be worshipped. Then indeed Christians would deserve punishment if it were established that the gods whom they did not worship because they thought they were not gods, really were gods.

“ But they are gods for us,” you say. Here we lodge an appeal, and carry the case from you to your conscience. Let your conscience judge us, let it condemn us, if it can deny that all these gods of yours were once men.<sup>a</sup> But if your conscience shall contest the point against us, it shall be refuted from the ancient books from which it learnt the gods ; and testimony is also given to this day by the cities in which the gods were born, and by the regions in which they left traces of anything they did,—yes, and in which they were demonstrably buried. And now—am I to run over them in detail, in all their number and greatness, new gods and old, barbarian, Greek, Roman, foreign, captive, adoptive, private, public, male, female, rustic, urban, naval, military ? It would be idle to list even their titles to make a compendium of them ; it would not give you new information but would merely remind you. For you certainly act as if you had forgotten. Before Saturn you had no god among you ; he is the original of all your pantheon, or of the more powerful of them, the better-known. So whatever is established about the source, will suit the posterity. As to Saturn, then, so far as books inform us, neither Diodorus the Greek nor Thallus, neither Cassius Severus nor Cornelius Nepos, nor any other author dealing with antiquities of that kind,<sup>b</sup> has alleged that Saturn was anything but a man. As to proofs



## TERTULLIAN

- si quantum rerum argumenta, nusquam invenio fideliora quam apud ipsam Italiam, in qua Saturnus post multas expeditiones postque Attica hospitia consedit, exceptus a Iano, vel Iane, ut Salii volunt.
- 8 Mons quem incoluerat, Saturnius dictus, civitas quam depalaverat, Saturnia usque nunc est, tota denique Italia post Oenotriam Saturnia cognominabatur. Ab ipso primum tabulae et imagine signatus nummus, et
- 9 inde aerario praesidet. Tamen si homo Saturnus, utique ex homine, et quia ab homine, non utique de caelo et terra. Sed cuius parentes ignoti erant, facile fuit eorum filium dici quorum et omnes possumus videri. Quis enim non caelum ac terram matrem ac patrem venerationis et honoris gratia appellet? vel ex consuetudine humana, qua ignoti vel ex inopinato
- 10 adparentes de caelo supervenisse dicuntur. Proinde Saturno repentino ubique caelitem contigit dici; nam et terrae filios vulgus vocat quorum genus incertum est. Taceo quod ita rudes adhuc homines agebant, ut cuiuslibet novi viri adspectu quasi divino commoverentur, cum hodie iam politi quos ante paucos dies luctu publico mortuos sint confessi, in deos
- 11 consecrant. Satis iam de Saturno, licet paucis. Etiam Iovem ostendemus tam hominem quam ex homine, et deinceps totum generis examen tam mortale quam seminis sui par.
- 1 XI. Et quoniam sicut illos homines fuisse non audetis negare, ita post mortem deos factos insti-

---

<sup>a</sup> Perhaps "laws."

from actual monuments, I find none more reliable than in Italy itself, where, after his many expeditions and his visit to Attica, Saturn settled down, made welcome by Janus,—or Janes, as the Salii prefer it. The mountain which he inhabited is called 8 Saturnius; the city whose bounds he staked out is Saturnia to this day; the whole of Italy in fact, after being called Oenotria, bore the name Saturnia. From him first came writing<sup>a</sup>; and coin stamped with an image; and hence he rules the treasury. Yet, if Saturn was a man, I suppose he was born of 9 man; and, since he was born of man, he was not the child of the sky and the earth. But, where a man's parents were unknown, it was easy for him to be called the child of sky and earth; we must all pass for being their children. Who would not call sky and earth mother and father, by way of veneration and honour? Or it may be merely human usage, just as we say that unknown persons or people turning up unexpectedly have come from the sky. Then as 10 Saturn was everywhere unexpected, it was his lot to be called a child of the sky. For people, whose family is unknown, are called, in the vulgar phrase, "sons of earth." I waive the fact that men were in those days so uncivilized that they were moved by the sight of any strange person as if divine,—when to-day civilized people will deify persons whom they have a day or two before by public mourning admitted to be dead. But enough of Saturn, in these few 11 words. We will show that Jove too was a man and born of man, and thereafter that the whole family swarm were mortal,—mortal as the seed they came of.

XI. But since, while you dare not deny that the gods 1 once were men, you have yet made it your practice to

## TERTULLIAN

tuistis adseverare, causas quae hoc exegerint retrac-  
 2 temus. Inprimis quidem necesse est concedatis esse  
 aliquem sublimiorem deum et mancipem quendam  
 divinitatis, qui ex hominibus deos fecerit. Nam  
 neque sibi illi sumere potuissent divinitatem, quam  
 non habebant, nec alius praestare eam non habentibus  
 3 nisi qui proprie possidebat. Ceterum si nemo esset  
 qui deos faceret, frustra praesumitis deos factos  
 auferendo factorem. Certe quidem si ipsi se facere  
 potuissent, nunquam homines fuissent, possidentes  
 scilicet condicionis melioris potestatem.

4 Igitur si est qui faciat deos, revertor ad causas  
 examinandas faciendorum ex hominibus deorum, nec  
 ullas invenio, nisi si ministeria et auxilia officiis  
 divinis desideravit ille magnus deus. Primo indignum  
 est, ut alicuius opera indigeret, et quidem mortui,  
 cum dignius ab initio deum aliquem fecisset qui  
 5 mortui erat operam desideraturus. Sed nec operae  
 locum video. Totum enim hoc mundi corpus sive  
 innatum et infectum secundum Pythagoram, sive  
 natum factumve secundum Platonem, semel utique  
 in ista constructione dispositum et instructum et  
 ordinatum cum omni rationis gubernaculo inventum  
 est. Imperfectum non potuit esse quod perfecit  
 6 omnia. Nihil Saturnum et Saturniam gentem expec-  
 tabat. Vani erunt homines, nisi certi sint a primordio

<sup>a</sup> Some scholars take *mancipem* in the other sense of "dealer in . . .", "seller of . . .", which seems to miss what is a central thought of Tertullian. Kellner renders, as above, "gewissermassen Ureigentümer der Gotteswürde."

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disput.* i. 28. 70 "possumusne dubitare quin eis praesit aliquis vel effector, si haec nata

## APOLOGETICUS, xi. 1-6

affirm that after death they became gods, let us discuss the causes that brought this about. First of 2 all, you must allow there is a God more sublime, true owner in his own right (so to say) of deity,<sup>a</sup> who made the gods out of men. For neither could they have assumed for themselves a deity they did not possess, nor could another give it them when they were without it, unless he really had it himself. But if there were nobody who could make gods, it is 3 idle to assume gods were made when you do away with the maker. At all events, if they could have made themselves, they would never have been men, with this power in themselves of having a better position.

So, if there is one who makes gods, I turn back to 4 examine the reasons for making gods out of men; and I find no reasons—unless their services and their assistance in his divine functions were desired by the great God. First, then, it is beneath his dignity to need the help of another (and a dead man's help, at that !) when, with more dignity, he might have made a god to start with, if he were going to need the aid of a dead man. But I do not see the place where 5 that aid is needed. For this whole fabric of the universe, whether unborn and unmade (as Pythagoras says) or born or made (as Plato prefers<sup>b</sup>), we find to be once for all disposed, equipped, ordered as it stands, and supplied with the complete guidance of reason. That could not be repeated, which has perfected all things. Nothing was left wanting for Saturn 6 and Saturn's tribe. Men will be fools, unless they are sure that from the beginning the rain fell from sunt, ut Platoni videtur, vel si semper fuerunt, ut Aristoteli placet, moderator tanti operis et muneris?

## TERTULLIAN

et pluvias de caelo ruisse et sidera radiasse et lumina floruisse et tonitrua mugisse et ipsum Iovem quae in manu eius inponitis fulmina timuisse, item omnem frugem ante Liberum et Cererem et Minervam, immo ante illum aliquem principem hominem de terra exuberasse, quia nihil continendo et sustinendo homini prospectum post hominem potuit inferri.

7 Denique invenisse dicuntur necessaria ista vitae, non instituisse. Quod autem invenitur, fuit, et quod fuit, non eius deputabitur qui invenit, sed eius qui instituit ;

8 erat enim antequam inveniretur. Ceterum si propterea Liber deus quod vitem demonstravit, male cum Lucullo actum est, qui primus cerasia ex Ponto Italiae promulgavit, quod non est propterea consecratus ut

9 frugis novae auctor, qui ostensor. Quamobrem si ab initio et instructa et certis exercendorum officiorum suorum rationibus dispensata universitas constitit, vacat ex hac parte causa adlegendae humanitatis in divinitatem, quia quas illis stationes et potestates distribuistis, tam fuerunt ab initio quam et fuissent etiamsi deos istos non creassetis.

10 Sed convertimini ad causam aliam, respondentes conlationem divinitatis meritorum remunerandorum fuisse rationem. Et hinc conceditis, opinor, illum deum deificum iustitia praecellere, qui non temere nec indigne nec prodige tantum praemium dispensarit.

11 Volo igitur merita recensere, an eiusmodi sint, ut illos in caelum extulerint et non potius in imum

---

<sup>a</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xv. 25. 102, states this of Lucullus, dating it A.U.C. 680, and adds that 120 years later the cherry crossed the ocean to Britain—"in Britanniam usque."

heaven, the stars shone, the lights were bright, the thunder roared, yes, and Jove himself was afraid of the thunderbolts which you put in his hand ; unless they are sure that before Liber and Ceres and Minerva and before the first man (whoever he was), crops came richly from the earth, for nothing designed to preserve and sustain man could be introduced *after* man. In fact, your gods are said to have discovered those necessities of life, not to have devised them. But what is discovered has already existed ; what has already existed will be credited not to him who discovered it but to him who devised it ; for it existed before it was found. But if Liber is a god because he showed men the vine, it is a sad pity for Lucullus, who first introduced the cherry from Pontus to Italy, that he was not consecrated a god for it, as author of a new fruit, because he was the discoverer of it.<sup>a</sup> Thus, if from the very beginning the universe stood there equipped and furnished with definite laws for the exercise of all its functions, from this point of view there really is no cause for electing men into the ranks of the gods ; because the posts and powers you have allotted to them existed from the beginning, and as surely would have existed even if you had never created these gods.

But you turn over to another reason ; you rejoin that the bestowal of deity was a method of rewarding their merits. And in this you allow, I suppose, that the God who makes gods excels in justice, seeing that neither recklessly nor unworthily, nor in prodigal style, has he dispensed this great reward. I would like, then, to review the merits alleged, to determine whether they are of a nature to raise those men to heaven and not rather to plunge them into the

## TERTULLIAN

tartarum merserint, quem carcerem poenarum infernarum cum vultis adfirmatis. Illuc enim abstrudi solent impii quique in parentes et incesti in sorores et maritarum adulteri et virginum raptores et puerorum contaminatores et qui saeviunt et qui occidunt et qui furantur et qui decipiunt et quicumque similes sunt alicuius dei vestri, quem neminem integrum a crimine aut vitio probare poteritis, nisi hominem negaveritis. Atquin ut illos homines fuisse non possitis negare, etiam istae notae accedunt quae nec deos postea factos credi permittunt. Si enim vos talibus puniendis praesidetis, si commercium, colloquium, convictum malorum et turpium probi quique respuitis, horum autem pares deus ille maiestatis suae consortio adscivit, quid ergo damnatis quorum collegas adoratis? Suggillatio est in caelo vestra iustitia. Deos facite criminosissimos quosque, ut placeatis deis vestris. Illorum est honor consecratio coequalium. Sed ut omittam huius indignitatis retractatum, probi et integri et boni fuerint. Quot tamen potiores viros apud inferos reliquistis! aliquem de sapientia Socratem, de iustitia Aristiden, de militia Themistoclem, de sublimitate Alexandrum, de felicitate Polycraten, de copia Croesum, de eloquentia Demosthenen. Quis ex illis deis vestris gravior et sapientior Catone, iustior et militarior Scipione? quis sublimior Pompeio, felicior Sulla, copiosior Crasso, eloquentior Tullio? Quanto dignius istos deos ille adsumendos expectasset, praescius utique potiorum?

bottom of Tartarus, which you, when you so please, affirm to be the prison of infernal punishment. That 12 is the place to which commonly are relegated the impious, those who commit incest on parents or sisters, who seduce wives, rape virgins, defile boys, who are cruel, who kill, who steal, who deceive, anyone, in short, who might be like some god or other of yours, not one of whom you will be able to prove free from guilt or vice—unless you deny that he was a man. And yet, just as you cannot deny that they 13 were men, those stains upon them forbid us to believe they afterwards became gods. If you sit as magistrates to punish such persons, if you (all decent people, that is) repudiate intercourse, converse, association with the bad and foul, but if the great God took their like to be partners of his majesty—why do you condemn people, whose fellows you adore? Your justice is an affront to heaven. You should make 14 your worst criminals into gods, if you would please your gods! The consecration of their equals is an honour to them! But, to drop discussion of this 15 indignity—let us suppose them to have been honest, upright, good. Well, even so, how many better men have you left among the dead? A Socrates for wisdom, an Aristides for justice, a Themistocles for military skill, an Alexander for grandeur, a Polycrates for luck, a Croesus for wealth, a Demosthenes for eloquence? Who among those gods of yours is more 16 reverend, more wise, than Cato, more just and more of a military genius than Scipio, grander than Pompey, luckier than Sulla, richer than Crassus, more eloquent than Cicero? How much more worthily might he have waited to take them as gods, when he must surely have foreseen that they would be better? He



## TERTULLIAN

- Properavit, opinor, et caelum semel clusit, et nunc utique melioribus apud inferos musitantibus erubescit.
- 1 XII. Cesso iam de isto, ut qui sciam me ex ipsa veritate demonstraturum quid non sint, cum ostendero quid sint. Quantum igitur de deis vestris, nomina solummodo video quorundam veterum mortuorum et
- 2 fabulas audio et sacra de fabulis recognosco : quantum autem de simulacris ipsis, nihil aliud reprehendo quam materias sorores esse vasculorum instrumentorumque communium vel ex isdem vasculis et instrumentis quasi fatum consecratione mutantes licentia artis transfigurante, et quidem contumeliosissime et in ipso opere sacrilege, ut revera nobis maxime, qui propter ipsos deos plectimur, solatium poenarum esse
- 3 possit quod eadem et ipsi patiuntur ut fiant. Crucibus et stipitibus inponitis Christianos. Quod simulacrum non prius argilla deformat cruci et stipiti superstructa? in patibulo primum corpus dei vestri dedicatur.
- 4 Ungulis deraditis latera Christianorum. At in deos vestros per omnia membra validius incumbunt asciae et runcinae et scobinae. Cervices ponimus. Ante plumbum et glutinum et gomphos sine capite sunt dei vestri. Ad bestias impellimur. Certe quas Libero
- 5 et Cybele et Caelesti applicatis. Ignibus urimur. Hoc et illi a prima quidem massa. In metalla damnamur. Inde censentur dei vestri. In insulis relegamur. Solet et in insula aliqui deus vester aut

---

<sup>a</sup> Jupiter, *e.g.*, according to various stories, was born, or buried, or both, in Crete. *Cf.* note on ch. 25. 7. Patmos will remind the reader of the relegation of a Christian to an island.

must have been in a great hurry, I think, and closed heaven once and for all ; and now, no doubt, when better men are grumbling about it in the world of the dead, he is put to the blush.

XII. I stop on this issue ; for I know that on the 1 basis of truth I shall have shown what they are not, when I have made clear what they are. So, as to your gods, I see merely the names of certain dead men of the past ; I hear their stories ; from their stories I understand their rituals. As to their actual images, 2 I find nothing beyond material akin to what is in ordinary pots and tools. Or else the matter of those same pots and tools experiences in consecration a change of destiny, as the free hand of art transforms it—and (let me say) does it with the maximum of insult, yes ! and sacrilege, while the work is proceeding. So it really might be a consolation to us in our pains, when we are tortured because of these gods, that they too suffer the same, to become gods. 3 You hang Christians on crosses and stakes ; what idol is there but is first moulded in clay, hung on cross and stake ? It is on a gibbet that the body of your god is first dedicated. With hooks you tear the flanks 4 of Christians ; but on your gods, over every limb of them, fall axes and planes and rasps. We lay down our necks [to lose our heads] ; before the lead, the glue, the nails, your gods have not a head at all. We are driven to the beasts,—those beasts which you attach to Liber, to Ceres, to the Celestial Mother. We are burnt in the flames ; so are they in the 5 first state of the ore. We are condemned to the mines ; and that is where your gods come from. We are banished to islands ; very frequently a god of yours will be born or will die on an island.<sup>a</sup>

## TERTULLIAN

nasci aut mori. Si per haec constat divinitas aliqua, ergo qui puniuntur, consecrantur, et numina erunt  
6 dicenda supplicia. Sed plane non sentiunt has iniurias et contumelias fabricationis suae dei vestri, sicut nec obsequia. O impiae voces, o sacrilega convicia! Infrendite, inspumate! Idem estis qui Senecam aliquem pluribus et amarioribus de vestra super-  
7 stitione perorantem reprehendistis. Igitur si statuas et imagines frigidas mortuorum suorum simillimas non adoramus, quas milvi et mures et araneae intellegunt, nonne laudem magis quam poenam merebatur repudium agniti erroris? Possumus enim videri laedere eos quos certi sumus omnino non esse? Quod non est, nihil ab ullo patitur, quia non est.

1 XIII. Sed nobis dei sunt, inquis. Et quomodo vos e contrario impii et sacrilegi et inreligiosi erga deos vestros deprehendimini, qui, quos praesumitis esse, neglegitis, quos timetis, destruitis, quos  
2 etiam vindicatis, inluditis? Recognoscite si mentior. Primo quidem, cum alii alios colitis, utique quos non colitis, offenditis. Praelatio alterius sine alterius contumelia non potest procedere, quia nec electio  
3 sine reprobatione. Iam ergo contemnitis quos reprobatis, quos reprobando offendere non timetis. Nam, ut

---

<sup>a</sup> Possibly the *O* clauses are to be taken as exclamations of the heathen reader. For *aliquis* cf. ch. 50. 5 "*aliqua Carthagini conditrix.*" But was Seneca blamed for his book *De Superstitione* (quotations in Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, vi. 10)? Contrast ch. 46. 4.

If this is the way to deity, then those whom you punish are being deified ; punishment and apotheosis will be the same thing. But then, obviously, your 6 gods do not feel these injuries and insults involved in their fabrication—nor your adoration either ! Oh, impious words. O profane abuse ! Grind your teeth, vent your spittle ! Yes, you are the same people, who blamed a Seneca, when at greater length and with words more bitter he declaimed on your superstitions.<sup>a</sup> So, if we do not adore statues and 7 images, cold as their own dead men, and just like them,—statues which the kites, the mice, the spiders<sup>b</sup> quite comprehend—should not praise rather than punishment have been the reward for repudiating recognized error ? For can we really be supposed to injure those who we are certain do not exist at all ? What is non-existent suffers no injury from anybody, because it does not exist.

XIII. “ But for us they are gods,” you say. Then 1 I retort your charge, and ask how is it that you are found to be impious, sacrilegious, irreligious towards your gods—in that those whom you presume to be gods you neglect ; whom you fear, you destroy ; whom you actually champion, you mock ? Look to it, if I lie. First, then, when some of you worship one lot 2 of gods and another group others, why, surely those whom you do not worship you offend. There cannot be preference of the one without slight to the other ; there is no choice without rejection. So you really 3 despise those whom you reject—whom you are not afraid to offend by rejecting them. For, as we noted

<sup>b</sup> The spiders weave their webs over the idols as over other objects, and the birds foul them ; they at least recognize what they are.

## TERTULLIAN

- supra praestrinximus, status dei cuiusque in senatus aestimatione pende-  
 4 bat. Deus non erat quem homo consultus nolisset et nolendo damnasset. Domesticos deos, quos Lares dicitis, domestica potestate tractatis pignerando, venditando, demutando aliquando in caccabulum de Saturno, aliquando in trullam de Minerva, ut quisque contritus atque contusus est, dum diu colitur, ut quisque dominus sanctiorem  
 5 expertus est domesticam necessitatem. Publicos aequè publico iure foedatis, quos in hastario vectigales habetis. Sic Capitolium, sic olitorium forum petitur; sub eadem voce praeconis, sub eadem hasta, sub eadem adnotatione quaestoris divinitas addicta con-  
 6 ducitur. Sed enim agri tributo onusti viliores, hominum capita stipendio censa ignobilia (nam hae sunt notae captivitatis), dei vero qui magis tributarii, magis sancti, immo qui magis sancti, magis tributarii. Maiestas quaestuarialia efficitur. Circuit cauponas religio mendicans. Exigitis mercedem pro solo templi, pro aditu sacri. Non licet deos gratis nosse; venales sunt.
- 7 Quid omnino ad honorandos eos facitis quod non etiam mortuis vestris conferatis? Aedes proinde, aras proinde. Idem habitus et insignia in statu.

---

<sup>a</sup> So the translators generally take it; but he may mean more precisely the lawyer, whose opinion is sought, rather than the senator who with his colleagues is consulted in the Senate. The emphasis is on *homo*.

<sup>b</sup> The dictionaries and the translators take *hastarium* to be an auction catalogue; Oehler cites authority for its use for the *place* where the auction is held; which is probably the sense here. The *hasta* is the sign of an auction.

<sup>c</sup> The Mother of the gods paid tribute to the Emperor, so Theophilus, i. 10; and we learn that the same was true of other gods. It seems as if the collection of this tribute (as of other tributes, *e.g.* harbour-dues), was put up to auction.

before, the status of each god depended on the estimate of him made by the Senate. He was not a god, whom man on consultation <sup>a</sup> had not wished, and by not wishing had condemned. Gods of the house, <sup>4</sup> whom you call *lares*, you deal with according to your household rights—pledging them, selling them, transforming them at times—making a cooking-pot of Saturn, a wash basin of Minerva, as each might be worn down and knocked about in the course of long worship—or as any particular owner might find domestic necessity more sacred. Public gods you <sup>5</sup> dishonour equally under public law, as you make them yield you revenue at auction.<sup>b</sup> Whether it is to the Capitol you go or the vegetable market, it is all one; the same tones of the auctioneer, the same spear, the same registration by the quaestor; and deity is knocked down to the highest bidder, and leased out. But lands subject to tribute go cheaper; <sup>6</sup> persons assessed under the poll-tax are less noble; for these are the marks of servitude. But gods are more sacred the more tribute they pay; indeed, the more sacred they are, the bigger the tribute. Their majesty is made money-making. Religion goes round the cookshops begging. You exact a price for the ground one stands on in a temple, for the approach to the holy rite; one may not know the gods for nothing; they are for sale.<sup>c</sup>

What at all do you do to honour them, that you <sup>7</sup> do not bestow on your dead also? Temples alike; altars alike. The same garb, the same emblems on

Fees for initiation are mentioned by Apuleius, *Met.* xi. 23. 28; cf. Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, i. 10. The apologists point out that no charge is made for the Christian sacraments. The begging priests of Cybele are familiar.

## TERTULLIAN

Ut aetas, ut ars, ut negotium mortui fuit, ita deus est. Quo differt ab epulo Iovis silicernium? a simpulo obba? ab haruspice pollinctor? Nam et haruspex mortuis apparet.

8 Sed digne imperatoribus defunctis honorem divinitatis dicatis, quibus et viventibus eum addicitis. Accepto ferent dei vestri, immo gratulabuntur, quod pares eis fiant domini sui. Sed cum Larentinam  
9 publicum scortum, velim saltem Laidem aut Phrynen, inter Iunones et Cereres et Dianas adoretis, cum Simonem Magum statua et inscriptione Sancti Dei inauguratis, cum de paedagogiis aulicis nescio quem synodi<sup>1</sup> deum facitis, licet non nobiliores dei veteres tamen contumeliam a vobis deputabunt hoc et aliis licuisse quod solis antiquitas contulit.

1 XIV. Nolo<sup>2</sup> et ritus vestros recensere: non dico quales sitis in sacrificando, cum enecta et tabidosa et scabiosa quaeque mactatis, cum de opimis et integris supervacua quaeque truncatis, capitula et ungulas, quae domi quoque pueris vel canibus destinassetis, cum de decima Herculis nec tertiam partem in aram

---

<sup>1</sup> *Some of the editors wish to emend this to cinaedum, which Kellner accepts: Oehler defends the text.*

<sup>2</sup> *v.l. volo: nolo is a correction which seems justified by the abrupt transition to literature, and the negative, non dico.* ∞

---

<sup>a</sup> Livy, i. 4. 7 "sunt qui Larentiam (foster mother of Romulus and Remus) vulgato corpore lupam inter pastores vocatam putent." Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 55-57, connects her with the Larentalia. Cf. Gellius, *Noct. Att.* vii. 7. 5, who says she left her money to Romulus, and because of that a public sacrifice is offered to her by the *flamen Quirinalis*.

<sup>b</sup> The famous if ill-founded story of the deification of Simon Magus. The altar was found after the Renaissance; it belongs not to Simon, but to a Sabine god, Semo Sancus.

the statues. The age, the art, the business of the dead man—and the god the same. What is the difference between the feast of Jove and the funeral feast? Between the sacrificial bowl and the cup of libation to the dead? Between the priestly inspector of entrails and the washer of corpses? For the former attends on the dead.

Still, it is quite proper for you to bestow the honour 8 of deity on dead emperors, when you make it theirs while alive. The gods will take it kindly—they will congratulate themselves—that their masters are put on a level with them. But when you adore Larentina,<sup>a</sup> 9 the public harlot (I could wish it had at least been Lais or Phryne!) among the Juno's, the Ceres-es and Diana's; when you establish Simon Magus with a statue and the inscription "Holy God"<sup>b</sup>; when from among the pages of the imperial court you make some lad a god of the Sacred Synod<sup>c</sup>;—well, though the old gods were no nobler themselves, still they will count it insolence from you, that the privilege which antiquity gave to them alone, is open to others.

XIV. I am unwilling to review your rituals. I 1 say nothing of your ways as to sacrifice, in offering the worn out, the decaying, the scabrous; nor how you lop from the choice and sound all that is useless,—heads and hoofs,—which at home you would have destined for the slaves and the dogs; nor of the tithe of Hercules,<sup>d</sup> of which you do not put one third

<sup>a</sup> For the story of Antinous see B. W. Henderson, *Emperor Hadrian*, pp. 130-134; Pausanias, viii. 9. 7-8.

<sup>d</sup> It was a common practice to vow a tenth to Hercules, if one should have real good luck; cf. Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, iii. 36. 88; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, iii. 12. 2; Plautus, *Truculentus*, ii. vii. 11, and others of his plays.



## TERTULLIAN

eius inponitis. Laudabo magis sapientiam, quod de perduto aliquid eripitis.<sup>1</sup>

- 2 Sed conversus ad litteras vestras, quibus informamini ad prudentiam et liberalia officia, quanta invenio ludibria! deos inter se propter Troianos et Achivos ut gladiatorum paria congressos depugnasse, Venerem humana sagitta sauciatam, quod filium suum Aenean paene interfectum ab eodem Diomede rapere vellet,
- 3 Martem tredecim mensibus in vinculis paene consumptum, Iovem, ne eandem vim a ceteris caelitibus experiretur, opera cuiusdam monstri liberatum, et nunc flentem Sarpedonis casum, nunc foede subantem in sororem sub commemoratione non ita dilectarum
- 4 iampridem amicarum. Exinde quis non poeta ex auctoritate principis sui dedecorator invenitur deorum? Hic Apollinem Admeto regi pascendis pecoribus addicit, ille Neptuni structorias operas Laomedonti
- 5 locat. Est et ille de lyricis (Pindarum dico) qui Aescolapium canit avaritiae merito, quia medicinam nocenter exercebat, fulmine iudicatum. Malus Iuppiter, si fulmen illius est, impius in nepotem, invidus in artificem. Haec neque vera prodi neque falsa con-
- 6 fingi apud religiosissimos oportebat. Nec tragici quidem aut comici parcunt, ut non aerumnas vel
- 7 errores domus alicuius dei praefentur. Taceo de philosophis, Socrate contentus, qui in contumeliam

<sup>1</sup> Here I have slightly altered Oehler's punctuation to make a new sentence and a new paragraph.

<sup>a</sup> These stories will be found in the *Iliad*, and some in the *Aeneid* as well.

<sup>b</sup> Euripides, *Alcestis*, prologue.

<sup>c</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, xxi. 443.

<sup>d</sup> Pindar, *Pythian* 3. 54 ff.

on his altar. I would rather praise your wisdom in saving something out of the loss!

But I turn to your literature, by which you are 2 trained in wisdom and the liberal arts; and what absurdities I find! I read how the gods on account of Trojans and Achaeans fell to it and fought it out themselves like so many pairs of gladiators; how Venus was wounded by a man's arrow, because she wished to snatch away her son Aeneas, who was all but killed by that same Diomedes; how Mars 3 was almost done to death by thirteen months in fetters; how Jove, to escape similar outrage from the rest of the celestials, was liberated by a certain monster's aid; how now he wept Sarpedon's fall, and now he shamefully craved his sister's embraces, recounting to her all the former doxies he had never loved so much! <sup>a</sup> And thereafter which of the poets 4 is not to be found following the pattern of his great original and dishonouring the gods? This poet binds over Apollo to King Admetus to feed his flocks <sup>b</sup>; the other leases Neptune's services as builder to Laomedon. <sup>c</sup> And then there is one of the lyric poets (I mean Pindar) who sings how Aesculapius on the score of his avarice, because he made improper use of his healing skill, was punished by a thunderbolt. <sup>d</sup> Jupiter was evil, if that thunderbolt was his—without proper affection for his grandson, envious of the artist. If these tales were true, they ought not to be pub- 5 lished, if false they should not be invented, among people so very religious. Neither tragic nor comic 6 poets spare them, but must needs find their plots in the sorrows or blunders that befall in some god's house or other.

I say nothing of the philosophers; Socrates 7

## TERTULLIAN

deorum quercum et hircum et canem deierabat. Sed propterea damnatus est Socrates, quia deos destruebat. Plane olim, id est semper, veritas odio est. Tamen cum paenitentia sententiae Athenienses et criminatores Socratis postea afflixerint et imaginem eius auream in templo collocarint, rescissa damnatio testimonium Socrati reddidit. Sed et Diogenes nescio quid in Herculem ludit, et Romanus Cynicus Varro trecentos Ioves, sive Iupitros dicendos, sine capitibus introducit.

- 1 XV. Cetera lasciviae ingenia etiam voluptatibus vestris per deorum dedecus operantur. Dispiciite Lentulorum et Hostiliorum venustates, utrum mimos an deos vestros in iocis et strophis rideatis : moechum Anubin, et masculum Lunam, et Dianam flagellatam, et Iovis mortui testamentum recitatum, et tres
- 2 Hercules famelicos inrisos. Sed et histrionum litterae omnem foeditatem eorum designant. Luget Sol filium de caelo iactatum laetantibus vobis, et Cybele pastorum suspirat fastidiosum non erubescitibus vobis, et sustinetis Iovis elogia cantari, et Iunonem, Venerem, Minervam a pastore iudicari.
- 3 Ipsum quod imago dei vestri ignominiosum caput et famosum vestit, quod corpus impurum et ad istam

<sup>a</sup> A tale in Diogenes Laertius (ii. 5. 23, 43), but there it is a brazen statue.

<sup>b</sup> Tertullian can hardly be quoting Lucian. Diog. Laert. vi. 2. 12, 80, says Diogenes wrote seven tragedies, one entitled *Herakles*.

<sup>c</sup> Varro's researches into old Italian religion proved a goldmine to the apologists, and especially to St. Augustine. Servius on *Aeneid*, xi. 785-788, speaks of Varro as "ubique expugnator religionis."

serves my need, who to mock the gods would swear by the oak, the goat and the dog. But Socrates was condemned, because he was destroying the gods. Quite clearly of old—that means always—truth is hated. Yet, when, in regret for their decision, the 8 Athenians later on punished his accusers and put a golden image of him in the temple, the cancelling of his condemnation was a testimony to Socrates.<sup>a</sup> Yes, and Diogenes too has his jest at Hercules<sup>b</sup>; and the Roman cynic, Varro, introduces three hundred Joves (or ought one to say Jupiters?) without heads.<sup>c</sup>

XV. And all the other wanton men of genius to 1 promote your pleasures do dishonour to the gods. Look at the pretty trifles of a Lentulus or a Hostilius<sup>d</sup> —is it your actors or your gods that make you laugh with their jokes and tricks? Think of “Anubis the Adulterer,” “The Gentleman Moon,” “Diana Lashed,”<sup>e</sup> and the reading of “The Will of the late Jove, deceased,” and the mockery of “Three hungry Hercules’ es.” But the literature of the stage 2 too attributes every foulness to the gods. The Sun laments his son hurled from the sky<sup>f</sup>—to your delight. Cybele sighs for her proud shepherd—and you don’t blush. You suffer a song to be sung of the ill-deeds of Jove<sup>g</sup>; you let Juno, Venus, Minerva submit to a shepherd’s award. What again does it mean 3 that the likeness of your god covers the shameful and infamous head of an actor<sup>h</sup>? that a vile body, cas-

<sup>a</sup> These names are otherwise unknown; but cf. Ovid, *Tristia*, ii. 497 “quodsi scripsissem mimos obscaena iocantes.”

<sup>e</sup> Cf. *Iliad*, xxi. 489.

<sup>f</sup> Phaëthon.

<sup>g</sup> *Elogium* in law is a judicial abstract of offences charged or proved against a prisoner.

<sup>h</sup> The actor wears a mask which portrays a god.

## TERTULLIAN

artem effeminatione productum Minervam aliquam vel Herculem repraesentat, nonne violatur maiestas et divinitas constupratur laudantibus vobis ?

- 4 Plane religiosiores estis in cavea, ubi super sanguinem humanum, super inquinamentā poenarum proinde saltant dei vestri argumenta et historias noxiis ministrantes, nisi quod et ipsos deos vestros
- 5 saepe noxii induunt. Vidimus aliquando castratum Attinx, illum deum ex Pessinunte, et qui vivus ardebat, Herculem induerat. Risimus et inter ludicras meridianorum crudelitates Mercurium mortuos cauterio examinantem, vidimus et Iovis fratrem gladiatorum
- 6 cadavera cum malleo deducentem. Singula ista quaeque adhuc investigare quis posset ? Si honorem inquietant divinitatis, si maiestatis vestigia obsolebant, de contemptu utique censentur tam eorum qui eiusmodi factitant quam eorum quibus factitant.
- 7 Sed ludicra ista sint. Ceterum si adiciam, quae non minus conscientiae omnium recognoscent, in templis adulteria conponi, inter aras lenocinia tractari, in ipsis plerumque aedituorum et sacerdotum tabernaculis sub isdem vittis et apicibus et purpuris thure flagrante libidinem expungi, nescio, ne plus de vobis

---

<sup>a</sup> The repeated *vidimus*, the *risimus*, taken with *de vestris sumus* (ch. 18. 4), and with the *malo non implere quam meminisse* (*De spectaculis*, 19), are illuminative references to the days of Tertullian before his conversion. The reader of Apuleius, *Golden Ass*, will not be surprised at these scenes of theatre and amphitheatre; he does not mean that the things were simulated, but actually done before the audience. Cf. Clement of Rome, i. 6. 2 Δαναῖδες καὶ Δῖραι, αἰκίσματα δεινὰ καὶ ἀνόσια παθεῖν. (Wordsworth's clever emendation νεάνιδες παιδίσκαι does not explain the corruption, if it is one, and scholars now reject the correction. But, while the text may be right, it is a little too vivid for Clement's usual style,

trated for the art of the theatre, represents some Minerva or Hercules? Is not their majesty violated, their deity defiled, by your plaudits?

But you really are still more religious in the amphitheatre, where over human blood, over the dirt of pollution of capital punishment, your gods dance, supplying plots and themes for the guilty—unless it is that often the guilty play the parts of the gods. We have seen<sup>a</sup> at one time or other Atys, that god from Pessinus, being castrated; and a man, who was being burned alive, had been rigged out as Hercules. We have laughed, amid the noon's blend of cruelty and absurdity,<sup>b</sup> at Mercury using his burning iron to see who was dead. We have seen Jove's brother,<sup>c</sup> too, hauling out the corpses of gladiators, hammer in hand. And all the details of it, who could inquire into them? If they overturn the honour of deity, if they blot out every trace of majesty, it simply means the sheer contempt felt by those who do these things, and by those for whom they do them.

But suppose that is all play. Then if I add—and the conscience of every man of you will recognize it as readily—if I add that in the temples adulteries are arranged, that between the altars the pander's trade is plied, that, quite commonly, in the very vestries of temple-keeper and priest, under those same holy fillets, crowns and purple garments, while the incense burns, lust is gratified—well, I do not know and the correction represents what the apologists constantly said in plain words. K. Lake in the Loeb *Apostolic Fathers* accepts neither text nor correction.)

<sup>b</sup> We are told that at noon cheap pairs of gladiators without shield or helmet were set to kill each other.

<sup>c</sup> *i.e.*, Pluto.

## TERTULLIAN

dei vestri quam de Christianis querantur. Certe sacrilegi de vestris semper adprehenduntur. Christiani enim templa nec interdiu norunt; spoliarent forsitan ea et ipsi, si et ipsi ea adorarent.

8 Quid ergo colunt qui talia non colunt? Iam quidem intellegi subiacet veritatis esse cultores qui mendacii non sint, nec errare amplius in eo in quo errasse se recognoscendo cessaverunt. Hoc prius capite et omnem hinc sacramenti nostri ordinem haurite, repercussis ante tamen opinionibus falsis.

1 XVI. Nam et, ut quidam, somniastis caput asinum esse deum nostrum. Hanc Cornelius Tacitus  
2 suspicionem eiusmodi *dei* inservit. Is enim, in quinta historiarum suarum bellum Iudaicum exorsus ab origine gentis, etiam de ipsa tam origine quam de nomine et religione gentis quae voluit argumentatus Iudaeos refert Aegypto expeditos sive, ut putavit, extorres vastis Arabiae in locis aquarum egentissimis, cum siti macerarentur, onagris, qui forte de pastu potum petitori aestimabantur, indicibus fontis usos ob eam gratiam consimilis bestiae superficiem  
3 consecrasset. Atque ita inde praesumptum opinor nos quoque ut Iudaicae religionis propinquos eidem simulacro initiari. At enim idem Cornelius Tacitus,

---

<sup>a</sup> *i.e.*, let alone finding their way about them at night for purposes of theft.

<sup>b</sup> Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 4, the wild ass tale; v. 9, Pompey's entrance into the temple, "inde volgatum nulla intus effigie vacuam sedem et inania arcana."

whether your gods may not have more complaints to make of you than of the Christians. Certainly the temple-robbers who are caught are always of your party. Christians have no knowledge of the temples even in the daytime <sup>a</sup>; perhaps they too would rob them, if they adored them.

Well, what *do* they worship, who don't worship <sup>8</sup> such things? Here you have it; it lies within easy reach of your understanding, that, since they are not worshippers of falsehood, they are worshippers of Truth; that they no longer continue in an error which they have recognized and so have abandoned. Get a hold of this point first, and then learn the whole system of our religion—but there are some false opinions about it that must first be cleared out of the way.

XVI. For, in fact, with other people, you have <sup>1</sup> dreamed that our God is an ass's head. This sort of notion Cornelius Tacitus introduced. For in the fifth <sup>2</sup> book of his *Histories* <sup>b</sup> he begins his account of the Jewish War with the origin of the race; and about that origin as about the name and religion of the race he discoursed as he pleased. He tells how the Jews, liberated from Egypt, or, as he thought, exiled, were in the wilderness of Arabia utterly barren of water; and how, dying of thirst, they saw wild asses, which chanced to be returning from their pasture (it was thought) to slake their thirst; how they used them as guides to a fountain, and out of gratitude consecrated the likeness of a beast of the kind. Thence came, I think, the assumption that <sup>3</sup> we too, standing so near Jewish religion, are devoted to worship of the same image. Yet this same Cornelius Tacitus—no, not Tacit, he, but a first



## TERTULLIAN

- sane ille mendaciorum loquacissimus, in eadem historia refert Gnaeum Pompeium, cum Hierusalem cepisset proptereaque templum adisset speculandis Iudaicae religionis arcanis, nullum illic reperisse simulacrum.
- 4 Et utique, si id colebatur quod aliqua effigie repraesentabatur, nusquam magis quam in sacrario suo exhiberetur, eo magis, quia nec verebatur extraneos arbitros, quamquam vana cultura. Solis enim sacerdotibus adire licitum; etiam conspectus ceterorum
- 5 velo oppanso interdicebatur. Vos tamen non negabitis et iumenta omnia et totos cantherios cum sua Epona coli a vobis. Hoc forsitan inprobamur, quod inter cultores omnium pecudum bestiarumque asinarii tantum sumus.
- 6 Sed et qui crucis nos religiosos putat, consecraneus erit noster. Cum lignum aliquod propitiatur, viderit habitus, cum materiae qualitas eadem sit, viderit forma, dum id ipsum dei corpus sit. Et tamen quanto distinguitur a crucis stipite Pallas Attica, et Ceres Pharia, quae sine effigie rudi palo et informi
- 7 ligno prostant? Pars crucis est omne robur quod erecta statione defigitur. Nos, si forte, integrum et totum deum colimus. Diximus originem deorum vestrorum a plastis de cruce induci. Sed et Victorias adoratis, cum in tropaeis cruces intestina sint tro-
- 8 paeorum. Religio Romanorum tota castrensis signa

<sup>a</sup> *i.e.*, not the mere head, but the whole creature.

<sup>b</sup> Epona, "the goddess of horseflesh," *cf.* Juvenal, vii. 157 "et facies olida ad praesepia pictas"; Apuleius, *Met.* iii. 27.

<sup>c</sup> See Sir James Frazer's note on Pausanias, i. 26. 6. The image was of wood and set up by the "aborigines," Plutarch says. Oehler identifies Ceres Pharia with Isis, but says there is no other evidence as to the rude image. Mayor cites Lucan, iii. 412-413 "simulacraque maesta deorum | arte

## APOLOGETICUS, xvi. 3-8

class chatterbox when it comes to lies!—in the same History tells how Cnaeus Pompey, on taking Jerusalem, visited the temple to look into the mysteries of Jewish religion, and found no image there. And 4 surely if the object of worship had been represented by any image, nowhere would it have been more likely to be seen than in its own shrine; all the more, because, however trivial the worship, there at least it feared no eyes from outside. For only the priests were allowed to enter; even to look in was made impossible for all others by a veil hung between. *You*, however, will 5 not deny that every kind of baggage cattle and whole donkeys <sup>a</sup> with their goddess Epona <sup>b</sup> are objects of *your* worship. Perhaps this is the real source of our bad name, that, among worshippers of every kind of beast and quadruped, we confine ourselves to the ass!

Yes, and the man who thinks we worship the cross, 6 will prove a fellow-worshipper of ours. For when a bit of wood is worshipped—what matters the shape, if the nature of the material is the same? what the form if it is itself the body of a god? Yet what distinction can you make between the shaft of a cross and Attic Pallas or Pharian Ceres, each of whom stands there unshaped, a rude pole, a log untrimmed? <sup>c</sup> Every balk of timber, which is set up erect, is a part of 7 a cross; we—perhaps—worship a god complete and whole. We have said that in the first instance your gods are moulded by the sculptors on a cross. <sup>d</sup> But you also adore Victories, and in all trophies the cross is the inner structure of the trophy. Roman religion, 8

*carent caesisque exstant informia truncis* " (the grove of the Druids).

<sup>d</sup> See ch. 12. 8. He refers once more to the wooden structure on which the clay is modelled for the image.

## TERTULLIAN

veneratur, signa iurat, signa omnibus deis praeponit. Omnes illi imaginum suggestus in signis monilia crucum sunt ; siphara illa vexillorum et cantabrorum stolae crucum sunt. Laudo diligentiam. Noluistis incultas et nudas cruces consecrare.

- 9 Alii plane humanius et verisimilius solem credunt deum nostrum. Ad Persas, si forte, deputabimur, licet solem non in linteo depictum adoremus, habentes  
 10 ipsum ubique in suo clypeo. Denique inde suspicio quod innotuerit nos ad orientis regionem precari. Sed et plerique vestrum adfectione aliquando et caelestia adorandi ad solis ortum labia vibratis.  
 11 Aequae si diem solis laetitiae indulgemus, alia longe ratione quam religione solis secundo loco ab eis sumus qui diem Saturni otio et victui decernunt exorbitantes et ipsi a Iudaico more, quem ignorant.  
 12 Sed nova iam dei nostri in ista proxime civitate editio publicata est, ex quo quidam frustrandis bestiis mercenarius noxius picturam proposuit cum eiusmodi inscriptione : **DEUS CHRISTIANORUM ONOKOITHΣ.**<sup>1</sup> Is erat auribus asininis, altero pede unguulatus, librum

<sup>1</sup> *Here I leave Oehler's text. The original word is very uncertain, it may have been bad Greek (risimus et nomen); manuscripts and editors have it in various shapes and restorations. The rendering is the nearest that translators have come to a meaning reconcilable with the general shape of the word (ὄνοκοιθης). Oehler added a central η, reading ONOKOIHTHΣ, thinking it might be "priest of the ass," asinarius sacerdos; but after all it was a god.*

<sup>a</sup> This phrase can be also construed "among the Romans the whole of the soldier's religion is to venerate," etc. So Kellner.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xiii. 3. (4.) 23, standards anointed on festal days; Dionys. Halic. vi. 45. § 2; Tac. *Ann.* i. 39. 7; ii. 17. 2 "propria legionum numina."

<sup>c</sup> The argument, says Kellner, "ist für uns etwas gesucht."

## TERTULLIAN

13 gestans et togatus. Risimus et nomen et formam. Sed illi debebant adorare statim biforme numen, qui et canino et leonino capite commixtos, et de capro et de ariete cornutos, et a lumbis hircos, et a cruribus serpentes, et planta vel tergo alites deos<sup>a</sup> receperunt.

Haec ex abundanti, ne quid rumoris inrepercussum quasi de conscientia praeterissemus. Quae omnia conversi iam ad demonstrationem religionis nostrae repurgavimus.

- 1 XVII. Quod colimus, deus unus est, qui totam molem istam cum omni instrumento elementorum, corporum, spirituum verbo quo iussit, ratione qua disposuit, virtute qua potuit, de nihilo expressit in ornamentum maiestatis suae, unde et Graeci nomen mundo κόσμον accommodaverunt. Invisibilis est, 2 etsi videatur; incomprehensibilis, etsi per gratiam repraesentetur; inaestimabilis, etsi humanis sensibus aestimetur. Ideo verus et tantus est. Ceterum quod videri communiter, quod comprehendere, quod aestimari potest, minus est et oculis quibus occupatur, et manibus quibus contaminatur, et sensibus quibus invenitur: quod vero immensum est, soli sibi notum 3 est. Hoc quod est, deum aestimari facit, dum aestimari non capit. Ita eum vis magnitudinis et notum hominibus obicit et ignotum. Et haec est summa delicti nolentium recognoscere quem ignorare non 4 possunt. Vultis ex operibus ipsius tot ac talibus, quibus continemur, quibus sustinemur, quibus oblectamur, etiam quibus exterremur, vultis ex animae

---

<sup>a</sup> The Abbé de Gourcey renders it thus: "Rien ne donne une idée de Dieu plus magnifique que l'impossibilité de le concevoir?"

We laughed at both the name and the shape. But 13 they at least ought at once to have adored a biform divinity, who have accepted gods with a dog's head or a lion's, gods with a goat's horns or a ram's, gods goat from the loins down, gods with serpents for legs, gods with wings on their feet or their backs.

All this, at unnecessary length—lest it should seem that, from conscious guilt, we had passed over any fragment of rumour un rebutted. All such tales, then, we have cleared off, and turn now to expound our religion.

XVII. What we worship is the One God ; who 1 fashioned this whole fabric with all its equipment of elements, bodies, spirits ; who by the word wherewith He commanded, by the reason wherewith He ordered it, by the might wherewith He could do it, fashioned it out of nothing, to the glory of His majesty. Hence the Greeks also have given to the universe the name *cosmos*, “ order.” He is invisible, though He is seen ; 2 incomprehensible, though by grace revealed ; beyond our conceiving, though conceived by human senses. So true is He and so great. But what in the ordinary sense can be seen, comprehended, conceived, is less than the eyes that grasp it, the hands that soil it, the senses that discover it. The infinite is known only to itself. Because this is so, it allows us to con- 3 ceive of God—though He is beyond our conceiving.<sup>a</sup> The power of His greatness makes Him known to men, and unknown. And here is the sum total of their sin who will not recognize Him whom they cannot fail to know. Would you have us prove him to you 4 from His own works, in their multitude and character, those works that contain us, that sustain us, that delight us ; yes ! and affright us ? Would you have

## TERTULLIAN

ipsius testimonio conprobemus? Quae licet carcere  
 5 corporis pressa, licet institutionibus pravis circum-  
 scripta, licet libidinibus et concupiscentiis evigorata,  
 licet falsis deis exancillata, cum tamen resipiscit, ut  
 ex crapula, ut ex somno, ut ex aliqua valitudine, et  
 sanitatem suam patitur, deum nominat, hoc solo, quia  
 6 Quod deus dederit omnium vox est. Iudicem quoque  
 contestatur illum Deus videt, et Deo commendo, et  
 Deus mihi reddet. O testimonium animae naturaliter  
 Christianae! Denique pronuntians haec non ad  
 Capitolium, sed ad caelum respicit. Novit enim  
 sedem dei vivi; ab illo, et inde descendit.

1 XVIII. Sed quo plenius et inpressius tam ipsum  
 quam dispositiones eius et voluntates adiremus,  
 adiecit instrumentum litteraturae, si qui velit de deo  
 inquirere, et inquisito invenire, et invento credere,  
 2 et credito deservire. Viros enim iustitiae innocentia  
 dignos deum nosse et ostendere a primordio in saecu-  
 lum emisit spiritu divino inundatos, quo praedicarent  
 deum unicum esse, qui universa condiderit, qui  
 hominem de humo struxerit (hic enim est verus Prome-  
 theus), qui saeculum certis temporum dispositionibus et  
 3 exitibus ordinavit, exinde quae signa maiestatis suae  
 iudicantis ediderit per imbres, per ignes, quas demer-  
 tendo sibi disciplinas determinaverit, quae ignoratis

---

<sup>a</sup> *patitur*, "experiences," like the Greek *πάσχει*, we are told by Rauschen; v.l. *potitur*.

<sup>b</sup> Contrast the statement (and the mind) of his contemporary Pausanias who sees by a ravine's side two stones, each a cartload, clay-coloured but smelling very like the flesh of a man; and he is told that these stones are what was left of the clay out of which Prometheus moulded the race of man (Paus., x. 4. 4).

us prove Him to you from the witness of the human soul itself? Yes! the soul, be it cabined and 5 cribbed by the body, be it confined by evil nurture, be it robbed of its strength by lusts and desires, be it enslaved to false gods,—none the less, when it recovers its senses, as after surfeit, as after sleep, as after some illness, when it recaptures<sup>a</sup> its proper health, the soul names God, and for this reason and no other, because, if language be used aright, He is the one true God. “Great God!” “Good God!” “Which may God give!” is the utterance of all men. That He is also Judge, is 6 shown by such utterance as: “God sees;” “I leave it to God;” “God will repay me.” O the witness of the soul, in its very nature Christian! And then, as it says these words, it turns its gaze not to the Capitol, but to heaven. For it knows the abode of the living God; from Him and from heaven it came.

XVIII. But that more fully and more firmly we 1 might approach God Himself and His thoughts and His will, He has given us the help of books, that who will, may inquire regarding God, on inquiring may find Him, on finding Him may believe, on believing may serve Him. Men worthy in their 2 stainless righteousness to know God and to show God, from the very beginning He sent into the world, steeped in the Holy Spirit, to proclaim that He alone is God, Who made the universe, Who fashioned man of mud—(for He is your true Prometheus!<sup>b</sup>)—Who ordained the course of the world, appointing the seasons, the one to follow the other; to tell us, moreover, what 3 proofs in flood and in fire He has displayed of His avenging Majesty; what laws of life He has appointed whereby we may please him; what requital He has

## TERTULLIAN

et desertis et observatis his praemia destinavit, ut qui producto aevo isto iudicaturus sit suos cultores in vitae aeternae retributionem, profanos in ignem aequae perpetuae et iugem, suscitatis omnibus ab initio defunctis et reformatis et recensitis ad utriusque meriti disputationem.

4 Haec et nos risimus aliquando. De vestris sumus. Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani.

5 Quos diximus praedicatores, prophetae de officio praefandi vocantur. Voces eorum itemque virtutes quas ad fidem divinitatis edebant, in thesauris litterarum manent, nec istae latent. Ptolemaeorum eruditissimus, quem Philadelphum supernominant, et omnis litteraturae sagacissimus, cum studio bibliothecarum Pisistratum, opinor, aemularetur, inter cetera memoriarum, quibus aut vetustas aut curiositas aliqua ad famam patrocinabatur, ex suggestu Demetri Phalerei grammaticorum tunc probatissimi, cui praefecturam mandaverat, libros a Iudaeis quoque postulavit, proprias atque vernaculas litteras, quas soli habebant.

6 Ex ipsis enim et ad ipsos semper prophetae peroraverant, scilicet ad domesticam dei gentem ex patrum gratia. Hebraei retro qui nunc Iudaei. Igitur et

7 litterae Hebraeae et eloquium. Sed ne notitia vacaret, hoc quoque a Iudaeis Ptolemaeo subscriptum est septuaginta et duobus interpretibus indultis, quos

<sup>a</sup> Often taken as "deeds of power," *δυνάμεις* in Justin, miracles.

<sup>b</sup> Ptolemy II. Philadelphus, the founder of the famous Alexandrian library and museum, king 283-245 B.C., for whom see E. R. Bevan, *A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, ch. 3 (p. 112 for the Septuagint.) For the library cf. Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 16, §§ 12-13.

<sup>c</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* xii. 2. 12.



determined for ignorance of those laws, for breaking or keeping them ; seeing that, when this age reaches its full end, He will sit as Judge, and His worshippers He will repay with life eternal, and the profane He will condemn to fire as perpetual and unceasing ; for the dead, every man of them from the beginning, shall be raised, refashioned and reviewed, that their deserts of either kind, good or evil, may be adjudged.

Yes ! we too in our day laughed at this. We are 4 from among yourselves. Christians are made, not born !

These messengers of God, whom we mentioned, 5 are called prophets from the function of prediction. Their voices, their virtues <sup>a</sup>—all directed to promote faith in Godhead—are still in the treasure-house of letters, which are no secret. The most learned of the Ptolemies, whom they surname Philadelphus, <sup>b</sup> most acute in all literature, the rival (I would say) of Pisistratus in love of libraries, in addition to the other documents which age or art recommended to fame (it was Demetrius of Phalerum that gave him the hint, of all scholars of that day most expert, chief librarian of the King)—Ptolemy, then, asked the Jews also for their books, their own literature in their own tongue, which they alone possessed. Of the 6 Jews had the prophets come ; to the Jews had the prophets ever preached as to the race and household of God, in accordance with the grace shown to their fathers. Hebrews of old they were, who now are Jews ; so the books are called Hebrew and the language. But that understanding of their books 7 might not be wanting, the concession was made to Ptolemy by the Jews, and seventy-two interpreters were given to him—men, whom Menedemus, <sup>c</sup> him-

## TERTULLIAN

Menedemus quoque philosophus, providentiae vindex,  
8 de sententiae communione suspexit. Adfirmavit haec  
vobis etiam Aristaeus. Ita in Graecum stilum exaperta  
monumenta reliquit. Hodie apud Serapeum Ptole-  
maei bibliothecae cum ipsis Hebraicis litteris ex-  
hibentur. Sed et Iudaei palam lectitant. Vectigalis  
libertas; vulgo aditur sabbatis omnibus. Qui  
audierit, inveniet deum; qui etiam studuerit intel-  
legere, cogetur et credere.

1 XIX. Primam instrumentis istis auctoritatem sum-  
ma antiquitas vindicat. Apud vos quoque religionis  
est instar, fidem de temporibus adserere. [Auctori-  
tatem litteris praestat antiquitas summa. Primus  
enim prophetae Moyses, qui mundi conditionem et  
generis humani pullulationem et mox ultricem iniqui-  
tatis illius aevi vim cataclysmi de praeterito exorsus  
est, per vaticinationem usque ad suam aetatem et  
deinceps per res suas futurorum imagines edidit,  
penes quem et temporum ordo digestus ab initio  
supputationem saeculi praestitit. Superior invenitur  
annis circiter trecentis quam ille antiquissimus penes  
vos Danaus in Argos transvenisset, Troiano denique

---

<sup>a</sup> Aristaeus (Aristeas) was an official of Ptolemy Philadelphus, but the "letter" in which he tells the story and which is the source of Josephus and of Tertullian (directly or indirectly) is historically worthless. It is from this source that the very dubious connexion of Menedemus with the LXX comes. This man was a philosopher of the period who had many adventures; Diogenes Laertius and Athenaeus have a good many stories about him.

<sup>b</sup> He is not precise as to Hebrew or Septuagint.

<sup>c</sup> A very condensed phrase; the Jews paid a head-tax of two drachmas to Jupiter Capitolinus, and enjoyed the right of free worship in their synagogues. Dio Cassius, lxxvi. 7.

<sup>d</sup> The bracketed passage is only found in one ms., the

self a philosopher, champion of belief in Providence, esteemed for their sharing this dogma with him. Aristaeus <sup>a</sup> has told you the story, too. So he left the records open to all in Greek. To this day in the temple of Serapis, Ptolemy's library is displayed together with the Hebrew originals. Why, yes! and the Jews openly read the books.<sup>b</sup> They have that freedom in return for a tribute.<sup>c</sup> Every Sabbath day there is common access to those books. He who will hear, will find God; he who will take the pains to understand, will find himself compelled to believe.

XIX. Supreme antiquity, then, claims for these books the highest authority. And among *you* it is almost a superstition to make credit depend on time elapsed.

<sup>d</sup>[Extreme antiquity gives books authority. For Moses was the first prophet. He began in the past with foundation of the world, the production of mankind, and later on the mighty cataclysm that avenged the iniquity of that age; by prophecy down to his own day and thereafter, in his own story he gave pictures of things yet to be. In his book the sequence of events set in order from the beginning has permitted the computation of the world's age. Moses then is discovered to have lived about three hundred years before your most ancient man Danaus had crossed to Argos; that means, he is about a thousand years earlier than the Trojan war, and

Codex Fuldensis. It is accepted as genuine by Harnack and Schanz; rejected by Rauschen. It looks like an alternative draft; and the *Ad Nationes* is a standing witness that Tertullian re-handled his matter. The reader will feel that the second draft is far the more vigorous.

## TERTULLIAN

proelio ad mille annos ante est, unde et ipso Saturno. Secundum enim historiam Thalli, qua relatum est Belum<sup>1</sup> Assyriorum et Saturnum Titanorum regem cum Iove dimicasse, ostenditur bellum cccxx et duobus annis Iliacum exitum antecessisse. Per hunc Moysen etiam illa lex propria Iudaeis a deo missa est. Deinceps multa et alii prophetae vetustiores litteris vestris. Nam et qui ultimo cecinit, aut aliquantulo praecucurrit aut certe concurrit aetate sapientiae auctoribus, etiam latoribus legis. Cyri enim et Darii regno fuit Zacharias, quo in tempore Thales, physicorum princeps, sciscitanti Croeso nihil certum de divinitate respondit, turbatus scilicet vocibus prophetarum. Solon eidem regi finem longae vitae intuendum praedicavit non aliter quam prophetae. Adeo respici potest tam iura vestra quam studia de lege deque divina doctrina concepisse. Quod prius est, hoc sit semen necesse est. Inde quaedam nobiscum vel prope nos habetis. De sophia amor eius philosophia vocitatus est, de prophetia affectatio eius poeticam vaticinationem deputavit. Gloriae homines si quid invenerant, ut proprium facerent, adulteraverunt. Etiam fructibus a semine degenerare contigit. Multis adhuc de vetustate modis consistere divinorum litterarum, si non maior auctoritas illis ad fidem de veritatis suae viribus quam de aetatis annalibus suppetisset. Quid enim potentius patro-

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler prints bellum.*

---

<sup>a</sup> Thallus appears to have been a Samaritan, a freedman of the Emperor Tiberius, and author of a Chronicle in three books.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Zechariah i. 1, "In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah." Cf. dated passages in Haggai i. 1, and ii. 1.

consequently earlier than Saturn himself. For according to the history of Thallus,<sup>a</sup> in which is narrated the war which Belus, king of the Assyrians and Saturn, king of the Titans, waged with Jove, it is shown that this war was 322 years before the fall of Troy. It was by this Moses too that their peculiar Law was sent to the Jews by God. Much follows ; and other prophets older than your literature. For the very last who sang was either a little antecedent to your sages and your legislators, or at any rate of the same period. For Zacharias lived in the reign of Cyrus and Darius,<sup>b</sup> at the very time when Thales, chief of the philosophers who wrote of Nature, could give no certain answer to Croesus's inquiry as to deity—perplexed, I suppose, by the words of the prophets. Solon told the same king that the end of a long life must be seen<sup>c</sup>—much as the prophets did. So it can be seen that your laws and your studies alike were fertilized from the [Hebrew] law and teaching of God ; the earlier must be the seed. Hence you have some tenets in common with us, or very near us. From *sophia* men call the love of wisdom philosophy ; from prophecy comes, by emulation of it, poetic "vaticination."<sup>d</sup> Anything glorious that men found, they must, to make it their own, spoil it. Even crops degenerate from their seed. In many ways I must maintain the antiquity of the divine library, did it not derive more authority to win credence from its own force of truth than from any annals of a former day. What can more powerfully sustain the testimony of

<sup>c</sup> Herodotus i. 32.

<sup>d</sup> *Vates* is bard and prophet, a familiar word in Horace, *vatis amici, vatis Horati* (*Odes* ii. 6. 24 ; iv. 6. 44), and in Virgil. And see the end of this bracketed passage.

## TERTULLIAN

cinabitur testimonio earum, nisi dispunctio cotidiana saeculi totius, cum dispositiones regnorum, cum casus urbium, cum exitus gentium, cum status temporum ita omnibus respondent, quemadmodum ante milia annorum praenuntiabantur? Unde et spes nostra, quam ridetis, animatur, et fiducia, quam praesumptionem vocatis, corroboratur. Idonea est enim recognitio praeteritorum ad disponendam fiduciam futurorum. Eaedem voces praedicaverunt utramque partem, eadem<sup>1</sup> litterae notaverunt. Unum est tempus apud illas quod apud nos separari videtur. Ita omnia quae supersunt improbata, *probata* sunt nobis, quia cum illis quae probata sunt tunc futuris praedicabantur. Habetis, quod sciam, et vos Sibyllam, quatinus appellatio ista verae vatis dei veri passim super ceteros qui vaticinari videbantur usurpata est. Sunt vestrae Sibyllae nomen de veritate mentitae, quemadmodum et dei vestri.]

- 2 Omnes itaque substantias omnesque materias, origines, ordines, venas veterani cuiusque stili vestri, gentes etiam plerasque et urbes insignes historiarum et canas memoriarum, ipsas denique effigies litterarum, indices custodesque rerum et (puto adhuc minus dicimus) ipsos inquam deos vestros, ipsa templa et oracula et sacra unius interim prophetae scrinium saeculis vincit, in quo videtur thesaurus collocatus totius Iudaici sacramenti et inde iam

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler prints eadem in both places, but the correction given above seems to be generally accepted and to be necessary. It is confirmed by the equivalent passage in 20. 4.*

<sup>a</sup> Perhaps "the exact dates."

<sup>b</sup> *i.e.*, there are false Sibyls just as there are false gods. There is a large collection of Sibylline oracles, in Greek hexameter verse, of more or less Jewish origin and a monotheistic tinge. (Edition by A. Rzach, 1891.) There is

that library than its daily fulfilment all the world over, when the disposal of kingdoms, the fall of cities, the fate of nations, the posture of the times,<sup>a</sup> answer so exactly in every particular to what was foretold thousands of years ago? It is from that fact that our hope (which you mock) draws animation, our faith (which you call presumption) corroboration. Recognition of what has come to pass may properly dispose to belief in what is yet to be. The same voices have foretold both alike; the same books have recorded both. Time, which seems to us to be two-fold (past and present), in those books is one. So all that remains overunproved, is for us proved, because it was foretold along with what is already proved but then was yet to be. You, too, I think, have a Sibyl—since this name belonging to a true prophetess of the true God has been very widely used to cover those who seemed to prophesy. Your Sibyls have turned the name from true to false, just as your gods have done.<sup>b]</sup>

So all the subject matter, all the material, all the 2 origins, chronologies, sources, of every ancient pen you know—yes, and most of your races, your cities, famous in history, hoary of memory<sup>c</sup>—nay, the very shapes of your letters, those witnesses and guardians of the past—and (for I seem to be understating things), I say, add your very gods, temples, oracles, rituals and all—the book of a single prophet notwithstanding beats them all, with centuries to spare,—that book in which is seen summed up the treasure of the whole Jewish religion, and in con-

irony in *habetis et vos*, as if the heathen Sibyl were a copy. The fact, however, was the other way.

<sup>c</sup> Cf. *μάθημα χρόνῳ πολὺόν*, Plato, *Timaeus*, 22 B†

## TERTULLIAN

3 nostri. Si quem audistis interim Moysen, Argivo  
Inacho pariter aetate est. Quadringentis paene annis  
(nam et septem minus) Danaum, et ipsum apud vos  
vetustissimum, praevenit, mille circiter cladem Priami  
antecedit, possem etiam dicere quingentis amplius et  
4 phetae etsi Moysi postumant, extremissimi tamen  
eorum non retrosiores reprehenduntur primoribus ves-  
5 tris sapientibus et legiferis et historicis. Haec quibus  
ordinibus probari possint non tam difficile est nobis  
exponere quam enorme, nec arduum, sed interim  
longum. Multis instrumentis cum digitorum sup-  
putariis gesticulis adsidendum est. Reseranda anti-  
quissimarum etiam gentium archiva, Aegyptiorum,  
6 Chaldaeorum, Phoenicum. Advocandi municipes  
eorum per quos notitia subministrata est, aliqui  
Manethon Aegyptius et Berosus Chaldaeus, sed et  
Hieromus Phoenix, Tyri rex, sectatores quoque ipso-  
rum Mendesius Ptolemaeus et Menander Ephesius et  
Demetrius Phalereus et rex Iuba et Apion et Thallus  
et si quis istos aut probat aut revincit; Iudaeus  
Iosephus, antiquitatum Iudaicarum vernaculus vindex;  
7 Graecorum etiam censuales conferendi, ut quae  
quando sint gesta aut concatenationes temporum  
aperiantur, per quae luceant annalium numeri;  
peregrinandum est in historias et litteras orbis. Et  
tamen quasi partem iam probationis intulimus, cum

---

<sup>a</sup> The man against whom Josephus wrote.

<sup>b</sup> Oehler says they are a whole horizon wide of the mark who take *qui* to refer to Josephus, as he once did himself.



sequence of ours as well. If you chance, however, to 3  
 have heard of one Moses, he is coeval with Argive  
 Inachus, about four hundred years (to be exact, less  
 seven) before Danaus who is *your* most ancient of  
 men, a rough thousand years ahead of Priam's cala-  
 mity. I might also say fifteen hundred years before  
 Homer, with authority for saying so. Then the rest 4  
 of the prophets—they, of course, come after Moses,  
 but the very last of them are found not to be later  
 than the early ones among your sages and lawgivers  
 and historians. All this, the proofs of it in due 5  
 order, it would not be difficult for us to set out in  
 detail—not difficult so much as endless, not an  
 arduous task, but for the moment too long. It  
 would mean sitting down to a pile of books, with one's  
 fingers busy in keeping the tally. We should have  
 to unlock the archives of the most ancient races too  
 —Egyptians, Chaldaeans, Phoenicians. We should 6  
 have to summon their fellow-citizens through whom  
 this knowledge is furnished to us—to wit, one Manetho  
 an Egyptian, and Berosus a Chaldaean, and in addition  
 Hieromus, a Phoenician and King of Tyre ; add their  
 followers Ptolemy of Mendes, Menander of Ephesus,  
 Demetrius of Phalerum, King Juba, Apion,<sup>a</sup> Thallus,  
 and any other who confirms or refutes them.<sup>b</sup> The  
 Jew Josephus, native champion of Jewish Antiquities,  
 must be consulted, and the Greek books of Origins, 7  
 to reckon out when each set of events befel, to dis-  
 close the concatenations of eras, to elucidate the  
 figures in our annals. It would mean an excursion  
 into the histories and literatures of the world. Still  
 we have really already introduced a good part of the

Other editors correct *si quis* to *qui*, which is obvious enough,  
 if it were not Tertullian writing.

## TERTULLIAN

8 per quae probari possint aspersimus. Verum differre praestat, vel ne minus persequamur festinando vel diutius evagemur persequendo.

- 1 XX. Plus iam offerimus pro ista dilatione maiestatem scripturarum, si non vetustate<sup>1</sup> divinae probamus, si dubitatur antiquitas. Nec hoc tardius aut aliunde discendum. Coram sunt quae docebunt, mundus et  
2 saeculum et exitus. Quicquid agitur, praenuntiabatur; quicquid videtur, audiebatur. Quod terrae vorant urbes, quod insulas maria fraudant, quod externa atque interna bella dilaniant, quod regnis regna compulsant, quod fames et lues et locales quaeque clades et frequentiae plerumque mortium vastant, quod humiles sublimitate, sublimes humili-  
3 tate mutantur, quod iustitia rarescit, iniquitas increbrescit, bonarum omnium disciplinarum cura torpescit, quod etiam officia temporum et elementorum munia exorbitant, quod et monstris et portentis naturalium forma turbatur, providenter scripta sunt. Dum patimur, leguntur; dum recognoscimus, probantur. Idoneum, opinor, testimonium divinitatis veritas  
4 divinationis. Hinc igitur apud nos futurorum quoque fides tuta est, iam scilicet probatorum, quia cum illis, quae cotidie probantur, praedicebantur. Eaedem voces sonant, eadem litterae notant, idem spiritus pulsatur, unum tempus est divinationi futura praefanti.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Some editors print an emendation here—reading vetustatem with a stop. We should then translate “We offer the majesty of the scriptures if not their antiquity: we prove them divine, if we fail to prove them ancient.” It certainly heightens the antithesis.*

---

<sup>a</sup> I am inclined to take this advice, and refer the reader to the Classical dictionary. Manetho and Berossus, however, popularized in Greek what they thought desirable of

100

proof, when we have indicated how the proof can be established. Better postpone it—lest in our haste we finish too little, or wander too long in finishing it.<sup>a</sup>

XX. More than an equivalent we offer you in return for postponement of proof—the majesty of the scriptures—if we do not prove them divine from their antiquity, if it is still a question whether they are ancient. There will be no delay about *this*, or reference to evidence from elsewhere; here, in our presence, are the things that will teach us—I mean, the world, all time, all history. Everything that happens was foretold; everything now seen was of old heard. That the lands swallow up cities; that the seas steal islands; that wars without and wars within lacerate us; that kingdoms clash with kingdoms; that famine and plague, local disasters and wholesale death lay us waste; that the lowly are set on high, the high brought low; that justice grows rare, iniquity lavish and to spare, good manners lack all care; that the seasons are out of gear and the functions of the elements astray; that the order of nature is perverted by monsters and portents—it was all foreseen, it was all written. While we suffer, it is all read in the book; the recognition is the proof of it. I opine that a fair proof of the divinity would be the truth of the divination! Hence, then, we have a sure belief in what is yet to be—as proved already, in that it was predicted along with what every day is being proved. The same voices name it, the same books proclaim it; the same spirit impels them; time is *one* for divination foretelling what shall be.

Egyptian and Babylonian antiquities of religion. Modern scholars, judging them from their fragments, think poorly of their accuracy.

## TERTULLIAN

5 Apud homines, si forte, distinguitur, dum expungitur, dum ex futuro praesens, dehinc ex praesenti praeteritum deputatur. Quid delinquimus, oro vos, futura quoque credentes, qui iam didicimus illi per duos gradus credere ?

1 XXI. Sed quoniam edidimus antiquissimis Iudaeorum instrumentis sectam istam esse suffultam quam aliquanto novellam, ut Tiberiani temporis, plerique sciunt, profitentibus nobis quoque, fortasse an hoc nomine de statu eius retractetur, quasi sub umbraculo insignissimae religionis, certe licitae, aliquid propriae  
2 praesumptionis abscondat, vel quia praeter aetatem neque de victus exceptionibus neque de solemnitatibus dierum neque de ipso signaculo corporis neque de consortio nominis cum Iudaeis agimus, quod  
3 utique oporteret si eidem deo manciparemur. Sed et vulgus iam scit Christum ut hominum aliquem, qualem Iudaei iudicaverunt, quo facilius quis nos hominis cultores existimaverit. Verum neque de Christo erubescimus, cum sub nomine eius deputari et damnari iuvat, neque de deo aliter praesumimus. Necesse est igitur pauca de Christo ut deo.

4 Dudum Iudaeis erat apud deum gratia ubi et insignis iustitia et fides originalium auctorum ; unde illis et generis magnitudo et regni sublimitas floruit et tanta felicitas, ut de dei vocibus, quibus edocebantur, de promerendo deo et non offendendo prae-

---

<sup>a</sup> Viz. present and past.

<sup>b</sup> *Secta*, the common word for a philosophic school, is adopted by Tertullian to describe the Christian community united in thought learnt from a great Teacher.

<sup>c</sup> *i.e.*, circumcision.

Among men, perchance a distinction may be made <sup>5</sup> while fulfilment proceeds, while from being future it is reckoned present, and then, no longer present, is counted past. Where is our mistake, I beg of you, if we believe also in the future, who have already learnt through two stages <sup>a</sup> to believe in it ?

XXI. But now that we have stated that this school <sup>b</sup> <sup>1</sup> rests on the very ancient books of the Jews—this school which most people know to be rather modern, as dating from the reign of Tiberius,—a fact we ourselves admit—perhaps some question may be raised as to the standing of the school, on the ground that, under cover of a very famous religion (and one certainly permitted by law), the school insinuates quietly certain claims of its own ; because (waiving <sup>2</sup> all question as to age) as regards forbidden food, sacred days, the bodily “ seal,” <sup>c</sup> or common designation, we have nothing to do with the Jews, as should surely be the case, if we were servants of the same God. But by now even the common people know <sup>3</sup> the name of Christ, taking him to be some man (as the Jews also thought), so that it is easier for anybody to think of us as worshippers of a man. But we neither blush for Christ (for it is our delight to be reckoned under His name and under it to be condemned) nor do we differ in our idea of God [from the Jews]. We must then say a few words about Christ as God.

Of old the Jews had favour with God ; such was <sup>4</sup> the outstanding righteousness and faith of the original founders of their race ; and thence followed for them a nation’s greatness, a kingdom’s splendour, such prosperity (in short) that by God’s own words (the source of their training) they were warned to

## TERTULLIAN

- 5 monerentur. Sed quanta deliquerint, fiducia patrum inflati ad declinandum, derivantes a disciplina in profanum modum, etsi ipsi non confiterentur, probaret exitus hodiernus ipsorum. Dispersi, páiabundi, et soli et caeli sui extorres vagantur ꝑ orbem sine homine, sine deo rege, quibus nec advenarum iure terram patriam saltim vestigio salutare conceditur.
- 6 Cum haec illis sanctae voces praeminarentur, eadem semper omnes ingerebant fore uti sub extimis curriculis saeculi ex omni iam gente et populo et loco cultores sibi adlegeret deus multo fideliores in quos gratiam transferret, pleniorum quidem ob disciplinae auctioris capacitatem.
- 7 Venit igitur qui ad reformandam et inluminandam eam venturus a deo praenuntiabatur, Christus ille filius dei. Huius igitur gratiae disciplinaeque arbiter et magister, inluminator atque deductor generis humani filius dei adnuntiabatur: non quidem ita genitus, ut erubescat in filii nomine aut de patris
- 8 semine. Non de sororis incesto nec de stupro filiae aut coniugis alienae deum patrem passus est squamatum aut cornutum aut plumatum, amatorem in auro conversum Danaidis. Iovis ista sunt numina vestra.
- 9 Ceterum dei filius nullam de impudicitia habet matrem ꝑ etiam quam videtur habere, non nupserat.

deserve God's care and not to offend Him. But 5  
 what sin they committed ; how proud confidence in  
 their origin led to their decline ; and how they  
 turned from what they had been taught into ungodly  
 ways—even if they did not confess it themselves, the  
 outcome of it all for them to-day would prove it.  
 Scattered, wanderers, exiles from their own soil and  
 sky, they stray the world over, without man or God  
 for their king ; they are not permitted even as  
 foreigners to greet their native land, with so much  
 as a footfall. Of this those holy voices warned them 6  
 beforehand, and insisted at the same time (every one  
 of them always, and in unison) that the day should  
 come when in the last courses of time God would  
 from every race, people and place gather Himself  
 worshippers far more faithful, to whom He would  
 transfer his favour, and that in fuller measure,  
 because they would be able to bear an ampler  
 discipline.

So to remake, to illuminate that discipline it was 7  
 proclaimed by God that Christ the son of God should  
 come ; and he came. To be the dispenser and  
 teacher of this favour (grace) and discipline, to be the  
 illuminator and guide of mankind, a Son of God was  
 proclaimed beforehand—not so born as to blush for  
 his sonship or his begetting. No incest with a sister 8  
 was here, no pollution of a daughter or another's wife ;  
 he had not to endure a divine father, disguised with  
 scales, or horns, or feathers, a lover turned into gold  
 for a Danaë ; no ! no ! it is your divinities that  
 suffer such things from Jove ! But the Son of God 9  
 has a mother touched by no impurity <sup>a</sup> ; even she,  
 whom he seems to have, had never been a bride.

<sup>a</sup> *i.e., coitus.*

## TERTULLIAN

10 Sed prius substantiam edisseram, et ita nativitatis qualitas intellegatur.

Iam ediximus deum universitatem hanc mundi verbo et ratione et virtute molitum. Apud vestros quoque sapientes ΛΟΓΟΝ, id est sermonem atque rationem, constat artificem videri universitatis. Hunc enim Zeno determinat factitatore, qui cuncta in dispositione formaverit; eundem et fatum vocari et deum et animum Iovis et necessitatem omnium rerum. Haec Cleanthes in spiritum congerit, quem permeatorem universitatis adfirmat.

11 Et nos autem sermoni atque rationi itemque virtuti, per quae omnia molitum deum ediximus, propriam substantiam spiritum inscribimus, cui et sermo insit pronuntianti et ratio adsit disponenti et virtus praesit perficienti. Hunc ex deo prolatum didicimus et prolatione generatum et idcirco filium dei et deum dictum  
12 ex unitate substantiae. Nam et deus spiritus. Et cum radius ex sole porrigitur, portio ex summa; sed sol

---

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 17.

<sup>b</sup> Compare Seneca, *Natur. Quaest.* ii. 45, who gives a good (and eloquent) summary of Stoic doctrine. "These ancient sages . . . recognized the same Jupiter as we do, the guardian and ruler of the universe, its soul and breath, the maker and lord of this earthly frame of things, to whom every name of power is appropriate. If you prefer to call him fate you will not be wrong. He it is on whom depend all things, from whom proceed all causes of causes. If you prefer to call him providence you will still be right; for he it is by whose counsel provision is made for the world that it may pursue its orderly course and unfold the drama of its being. If you prefer to call him nature, you will make no mistake; for it is he from whom all things derive being, and by whose breath we live. If you prefer to call him the world, you will not be in error; for he is everything that you can see, he is totally infused in all his parts, self-sustained through inherent power" (translation by John Clark). Compare also Virgil, *Georgic*, iv. 221-224:



But first let me speak of his essential nature and 10  
so the manner of his birth will be understood.

We have already said <sup>a</sup> that God devised the whole  
universe by Word, by Reason, by Might. Among  
your own philosophers, too, it is argued that *Logos*,  
that is Word and Reason, would seem to be the  
Artificer of the universe. This *Logos* Zeno defines as  
the maker who has formed and ordered all ; he will  
have it that this *Logos* is also called fate and God, and  
mind of Jove, and universal law. All this Cleanthes  
gathers up into Spirit and affirms it to pervade the  
universe.<sup>b</sup> We, too, to that Word, Reason and Power 11  
(by which we said God devised all things) would ascribe  
Spirit as its proper nature ; and in Spirit, giving utter-  
ance, we should find Word ; with Spirit, ordering and  
disposing all things, Reason ; and over Spirit, achieving  
all things, Power. This,<sup>c</sup> we have been taught, proceeds  
from God, begotten in this proceeding from God, and  
therefore called " Son of God " and " God " because of  
unity of nature. For God too is spirit. When a ray is 12  
projected from the sun, it is a portion of the whole ;  
but

deum namque ire per omnes  
terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum.  
hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum  
quemque sibi tenuis nascentem arcessere vitas ;

and *Aeneid*, vi. 724 ff., especially the lines :

spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus  
mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

<sup>c</sup> " This " I leave as bald as *Hunc* in the Latin, on  
purpose. I would remind the reader that the author is  
pre-Nicene, and that the translator is not a theologian.  
The general line of Tertullian is that of the second-century  
apologists, in whom the simile from one light kindling  
another light is very familiar. The difficulties of early  
Latin terminology (*substantia* for *οὐσία*), *materia*, etc., are  
beyond discussion in a footnote.

## TERTULLIAN

erit in radio, quia solis est radius nec separatur substantia sed extenditur. Ita de spiritu spiritus et de deo deus ut lumen de lumine accensum. Manet integra et indefecta materiae matrix, etsi plures inde traduces qualitatis mutueris: ita et quod de deo profectum est, deus est dei filius et unus ambo.

- 13 Ita et de spiritu spiritus et de deo deus modulo alternum numerum, gradu non statu fecit, et a  
14 matrice non recessit sed excessit. Iste igitur dei radius, ut retro semper praedicabatur, delapsus in virginem quandam et in utero eius caro figuratus nascitur homo deo mixtus. Caro spiritu instructa nutritur, adolescit, adfatur, docet, operatur et Christus est.

- Recipite interim hanc fabulam, similis est vestris, dum ostendimus quomodo Christus probetur et qui penes vos eiusmodi fabulas aemulas ad destructionem  
15 veritatis istiusmodi praeministraverint. Sciebant et Iudaei venturum esse Christum, scilicet quibus prophetae loquebantur. Nam et nunc adventum eius expectant, nec alia magis inter nos et illos compulsatio est quam quod iam venisse non credunt. Duobus enim adventibus eius significatis, primo, qui iam expunctus est in humilitate conditionis humanae, secundo, qui concludendo saeculo imminet in sublimitate divinitatis exertae, primum non intellegendo secundum, quem manifestius praedicatum sperant,  
16 unum existimaverunt. Ne enim intellegerent pristinum, credituri, si intellexissent, et consecuturi salu-

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Adv. Praxean*, 2.

<sup>♣</sup> He means the demons; see ch. 22. 9.

the sun will be in the ray, because it is the sun's ray, nor is it a division of nature, but an extension. Spirit from Spirit, God from God—as light is lit from light. The source of the substance remains whole and undiminished even if you borrow many offshoots of its quality from it. Thus what 13 has proceeded from God, is God and God's Son, and both are one. Thus Spirit from Spirit, God from God—it makes in mode a double number, in order not in condition (*status*), not departing from the source but proceeding from it.<sup>a</sup> This ray of God, as was 14 ever foretold in time past, entered into a certain virgin, and, in her womb fashioned into flesh, is born, man mingled with God. The flesh informed by the spirit is nourished, grows to manhood, speaks, teaches, acts—and is Christ.

For the moment accept this story (it is like your own stories) while we show how Christ is proved, and who they were who, in order to destroy the truth, set about among you rival stories of the same kind.<sup>b</sup> The Jews knew that Christ was to come, of 15 course, for it was to them that the prophets spoke. Even now the Jews look for his coming, nor is there any other greater cause of clash between us than that they do not believe he has come. Two comings were predicted for him; in the first (which is already fulfilled) he should come in the lowliness of human form; in the second, which impends for the ending of the world, it should be in the majesty of deity displayed. But the Jews misunderstood the first coming; and the second, which was more clearly foretold and for which they hope, they took to be the only one. As for the first coming—they would 16 have believed, if they had understood, and they

## TERTULLIAN

tem, si credidissent, meritum fuit delictum eorum. Ipsi legunt ita scriptum mulctatos se sapientia et intellegentia et oculorum et aurium fruge.

- 17 Quem igitur hominem solummodo praesumpserant de humilitate, sequebatur uti magum aestimarent de potestate, cum ille verbo daemonia de hominibus excuteret, caecos reluminaret, leprosos purgaret, paralyticos restringeret, mortuos denique verbo redderet vitae, elementa ipsa famularet compescens procellas et freta ingrediens, ostendens se esse verbum dei, id est ΛΟΓΟΝ, illud primordiale, primogenitum, virtute et ratione comitatum et spiritu fultum, eundem qui verbo omnia et faceret et fecisset.
- 18 Ad doctrinam vero eius, qua revincebantur magistri primoresque Iudaeorum, ita exasperabuntur, maxime quod ingens ad eum multitudo deflecteret, ut postremo oblatum Pontio Pilato, Syriam tunc ex parte Romana procuranti, violentia suffragiorum in crucem Iesum dedi sibi extorserint. Praedixerat et ipse ita fac-
- 19 turos ; parum si non et prophetae retro. Et tamen suffixus multa mortis illius propria ostendit insignia. Nam spiritum cum verbo sponte dimisit, praevento carnificis officio. Eodem momento dies medium orbem signante sole subducta est. Deliquium utique putaverunt qui id quoque super Christo praedicatum
- 20 non scierunt. Et tamen eum mundi casum relatum

---

<sup>a</sup> Isaiah vi. 9, 10.

would have won salvation if they had believed—but what prevented them from believing was the result of their sin. They themselves read it written in scripture <sup>a</sup> that they have been deprived of wisdom and understanding, of the fruits of eye and ear.

From his lowly guise they took him to be merely 17 a man ; so it followed that, confronted by his power, they counted him a magician. For with a word he drove devils out of men, he gave light again to the blind, he cleansed the lepers, he braced up the paralytic, and to crown all he restored the dead to life by his word ; he made the very elements his servants, he controlled the storm, he walked on the sea,—showing that he is the *Logos* of God, that is the Word, original and first-begotten, attended by Power and Reason, upheld by Spirit, the same Being who by his word still made as he had made all things. His teach- 18 ing, with its refutation of the instructors and chief men of the Jews, so incensed them (chiefly because of the vast multitudes it turned to him) that at last they brought him to Pontius Pilate, at that time Roman procurator of Syria, and by the fury of their suffrages extorted it from Pilate that Jesus should be handed over to them to be crucified. He himself had foretold that they would do this. If that be not enough, so had the prophets long before. Yet, nailed to the 19 cross he showed many signs by which his death was distinguished from others. For with a word, of his own will, he dismissed his spirit—forestalling the work of the executioner. At that very moment, though the sun was in mid sky, day was withdrawn. An eclipse, of course, they supposed it, who did not know that this too was predicted of Christ ; yet that 20 cosmic event you have in your archives ; it is told

## TERTULLIAN

- in arcanis vestris habetis. Tunc Iudaei detractum et sepulchro conditum magna etiam militari manu custodiae diligentia circumsederunt, ne, quia praedixerat tertia die resurrecturum se a morte, discipuli
- 21 furto amoliti cadaver fallerent suspectos! Sed ecce tertia die concussa repente terra, et mole revoluta quae obstruxerat sepulchrum, et custodia pavore disiecta, nullis apparentibus discipulis, nihil in sepulchro repertum est praeterquam exuviae sepulti.
- 22 Nihilominus tamen primores, quorum intererat et scelus divulgare et populum vectigalem et famularem sibi a fide revocare, subreptum a discipulis iactitaverunt. Nam nec ille se in vulgus eduxit, ne impii errore liberarentur, ut et fides, non mediocri
- 23 praemio destinata, difficultate constaret. Cum discipulis autem quibusdam apud Galilaeam, Iudaeae regionem, ad quadraginta dies egit docens eos quae docerent. Dehinc ordinatis eis ad officium praedicandi per orbem circumfusa nube in caelum est receptus, multo verius quam apud vos adseverare de Romulo Proculi solent.
- 24 Ea omnia super Christo Pilatus, et ipse iam pro sua conscientia Christianus, Caesari tunc Tiberio nuntiavit. Sed et Caesares credidissent super Christo, si aut Caesares non essent necessarii saeculo, aut si et
- 25 Christiani potuissent esse Caesares. Discipuli quoque diffusi per orbem ex praecepto magistri dei paruerunt,

<sup>a</sup> Acts x. 40 "non omni populo" (Vulgate).

<sup>b</sup> Cf. p. 376 n.

<sup>c</sup> This report to Caesar was a presumption; the pagan was challenged to look in the archives for it. The idea was fertile in literature of a kind. Cf. ch. v. 2; Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 2. The *Gospel of Nicodemus*, with its magnificent pendant, *The Harrowing of Hell*, is one attempt to develop the story. The *Harrowing* is from another writer, of fine imagination.

there. He was taken down from the cross and laid in a tomb ; the Jews with supreme care surrounded it with a great military guard, lest, since he had foretold his rising from death on the third day, his disciples by stealth should get the dead body away and trick them for all their suspicions. But, look you ! on 21 the third day, there was a sudden earthquake ; the structure that blocked the tomb was shaken down ; the guard was scattered in terror ; but though no disciples appeared on the scene, nothing was found in the tomb but the cloths in which he was buried. None the less, the chief men of the Jews—it was to their 22 interest to tell a false tale and to recapture from the faith a people to pay them tribute and yield them service ; so they spread the story about that the disciples had stolen him. For he did not display himself to the common gaze,<sup>a</sup> lest the wicked should be set free from their misjudgement ; and that faith, with that supreme prize set before it, should not be too easy. With certain disciples he spent forty days 23 in Galilee, a region of Judaea, teaching them what they should teach. Then he appointed them to the duty of preaching throughout the world, and, with a cloud cast about him, he was caught up to heaven—far more truly than any Romulus of yours in the tale of Proculus.<sup>b</sup>

This whole story of Christ was reported to Caesar 24 (at that time it was Tiberius) by Pilate,<sup>c</sup> himself in his secret heart already a Christian. Yes, and the Caesars also would have believed on Christ, if Caesars had not been necessary for the world, or if the Caesars, too, could have been Christians. His disciples, also, were scattered through the world, 25 in obedience to the precept of God their teacher ; they

## TERTULLIAN

qui et ipsi a Iudaeis insequentibus multa perpassi  
utique pro fiducia veritatis libenter Romae postremo  
per Neronis saevitiam sanguinem Christianum semi-  
26 naverunt. Sed monstrabimus vobis idoneos testes  
Christi ipsos illos quos adoratis. Multum est si eos  
adhibeam ut credatis Christianis propter quos non  
credit is Christianis. Interim hic est ordo nostrae  
institutionis, hunc edidimus et sectae et nominis  
censum cum suo auctore.

27 Nemo iam infamiam incutiat, nemo aliud existimet,  
quia nec fas est ulli de sua religione mentiri. Ex eo  
enim quod aliud a se coli dicit quam colit, negat quod  
colit, et culturam et honorem in alterum transfert, et  
28 transferendo iam non colit quod negavit. Dicimus,  
et palam dicimus, et vobis torquentibus lacerati et  
cruenti vociferamur : Deum colimus per Christum.  
Illum hominem putate, per eum et in eo se cognosci  
29 et coli deus vult. Ut Iudaeis respondeamus, et ipsi  
dominum per hominem Moysen colere didicerunt :  
ut Graecis occurram, Orpheus Pieriae, Musaeus  
Athenis, Melampus Argis, Trophonius Boeotiae  
initiationibus homines obligaverunt : ut ad vos  
quoque dominatores gentium adspiciam homo fuit  
Pompilius Numa, qui Romanos operosissimis super-  
30 stitionibus oneravit. Licuerit et Christo commentari  
divinitatem, rem propriam, non qua rupices et adhuc  
feros homines multitudīni tot numinum demeren-

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. ch. 50. 13.



suffered much from Jewish persecution—but gladly enough because of their faith in the truth ; finally at Rome, through the cruelty of Nero, they sowed the seed of Christian blood.<sup>a</sup> But we will produce 26 for you as witnesses to Christ (and very appropriate for you) those very beings whom you worship. It will be a great point if I can use to make you believe in Christ the very beings for whose sake you do not believe the Christians. Meantime you have before you the facts in due order that relate to our founding ; we have given you here the origin of our school and of its name, and told you of our Founder.

Let none now fling foul charges at us ; let none 27 believe aught but what we have said ; because no one may lie about his religion. For in the very act of saying he worships something other than he does worship, he denies what he worships ; his worship and his reverence he transfers to another and by the transfer ceases to worship the God he has denied. We say—and we say it openly—while you are tortur- 28 ing us,—mangled and bleeding—we shout it : “ We worship God through Christ.” Count him man, if you will ; through him and in him God would have Himself known and worshipped. A word to the Jews ; 29 they themselves learned to worship the Lord through the man Moses. A retort to the Greeks : Orpheus in Pieria, Musaeus at Athens, Melampus at Argos, Trophonius of Boeotia, have bound men by their religious ceremonies. A glance at you also, rulers of the nations : Numa Pompilius was a man, Numa who loaded the Romans with the most fatiguing superstitions. Surely Christ too may be given leave 30 to devise deity for himself and make it his own, not as one who should mould men, stockish and still

## TERTULLIAN

dorum attonitos efficiendo ad humanitatem temperaret, quod Numa, sed qui iam expolitos et ipsa urbanitate deceptos in agnitionem veritatis ocularet. Quaerite igitur si vera est ista divinitas Christi.

31 Si ea est qua cognita ad bonum quis reformatur, sequitur ut falsae renuntietur, conperta inprimis illa omni ratione quae delitiscens sub nominibus et imaginibus mortuorum quibusdam signis et miraculis et oraculis fidem divinitatis operatur.

1 XXII. Atque adeo dicimus esse substantias quasdam spirituales. Nec novum nomen est. Sciunt daemones philosophi, Socrate ipso ad daemonii arbitrium expectante. Quidni? cum et ipsi daemonium a pueritia adhaesisse dicatur, dehortatorium plane a  
2 bono. Omnes sciunt poëtae; etiam vulgus indoctum in usum maledicti frequentat. Nam et Satanam, principem huius mali generis, proinde de propria conscientia animae eadem execramenti voce pronuntiat. Angelos quoque etiam Plato non negavit.

3 Utriusque nominis testes esse vel magi adsunt. Sed

---

<sup>a</sup> On this chapter about demons see Plato, *Apology*, 40, for the "familiar oracle within me," as Jowett translates it; cf. *ib.* 27. Tertullian is more derisive than accurate here. Plato constantly discusses gods and their nature, notably in *Rep.* ii. 378 D, E (the gods must be spoken of as they *are*, whatever defence is made of myth by the use of allegory), and *Timaeus*, 41 A-D (intermediary gods). Plutarch wrote much on the subject and emphasizes Hesiod's distinction between gods and demons (which is hardly to be found in Homer). See my *Conflict of Religions*, ch. 3, pp. 94-103. Tertullian's contemporary Apuleius in his little treatise "On the God of Socrates" offers the most illuminative commentary on what the Christian apologists say. See *Conflict*, pp. 231-232. Plutarch in his *De Iside* discusses "the Magian Zoroaster, who lived about 500 years before the Trojan War," and his doctrine of good and bad spiritual natures; modern scholars give Zoroaster a much later date, and know more of

savage, to civilization by terrorizing them with such a crowd of gods to worship as Numa did ; but as one who should give to men, highly civilized already, and misled by their own urbanity, eyes to recognize the truth. Ask the question, then, whether that deity of Christ be true. If it is in fact such a deity that 31 the recognition of it remakes a man and makes him good, then it follows that false deity must be renounced, not least when the whole scheme of it is laid bare—how, under cover of the names and images of dead men, by means of certain signs, miracles and oracles, it gains credence for its own divinity.

XXII. Yes, we say there are certain spiritual 1 natures ; nor is the name new. The philosophers know of demons, with Socrates himself watching for the will of his *daimonion*.<sup>a</sup> Why not ? When that *daimonion* is said to have stuck to him from boyhood, a dissuasive influence—obviously from what was good. All the poets know of them ; even the untaught 2 vulgar make constant use of them in cursing ; for by way of execration they utter the name of Satan,<sup>b</sup> the prince of this evil kind, as it were from their souls' instinctive knowledge. Angels again Plato has not denied. To both names, demon and angel, the Magi answer our summons to bear witness. But the 3

his real teaching ; but the literature of the Roman empire is full of references to *magi* and magic. Herodotus perhaps first introduced μάγοι to the notice of the West ; i. 101, 120, 140. The Manichaean heresy is an offshoot, or indebted at least to Zoroaster. For which see Augustine, *Confessions*.

<sup>b</sup> A similar statement as to Satan in his *De Testimonio Animae*. 3, where the commentator suggests it is the ejaculation *malum* ' that is meant. Perhaps ; but by A.D. 200 there may have been new varieties in execration. •

## TERTULLIAN

- quomodo de angelis quibusdam sua sponte corruptis corruptior gens daemonum evaserit, damnata a deo cum generis auctoribus et cum eo quem diximus principe, apud litteras sanctas ordo cognoscitur.
- 4 Nunc de operatione eorum satis erit exponere. Operatio eorum est hominis eversio. Sic malitia spiritalis a primordio auspicata est in hominis exitium. Itaque corporibus quidem et valitudines infligunt et aliquos casus acerbos, animae vero repentinos et extraordinarios per vim excessus. Suppetit illis ad utramque substantiam hominis adeundam subtilitas
- 5 et tenuitas sua. Multum spiritalibus viribus licet, ut invisibiles et insensibiles in effectu potius quam in actu suo appareant, si poma, si fruges nescio quod aurae latens vitium in flore praecipitat, in germine exanimat, in pubertate convulnerat, ac si caeca ratione temptatus aër pestilentes haustus suos offundit.
- 6 Eadem igitur obscuritate contagionis adspiratio daemonum et angelorum mentis quoque corruptelas agit furoribus et amentis foedis aut saevis libidinibus cum erroribus variis, quorum iste potissimus quo deos istos captis et circumscriptis hominum mentibus commendat, ut et sibi pabula propria nidoris et
- 7 sanguinis procuret simulacris imaginibus oblata. Et quae illi accuratior pascua est, quam ut hominem e

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Genesis vi. 1-4; Coloss. ii. 18; 2 Peter ii. 4. Also Psalm xcv. 5 (LXX), all the gods of the nations are demons.

<sup>b</sup> I am not clear here whether both clauses represent the same thing, *i.e.* a general blight and failure of crops, or two things, a blight and a pestilence. M. Waltzing's version implies the latter against the earlier translators.

<sup>c</sup> *Illi* and *avertat* are read by the mss. and corrected to the plural by some editors. *Illi* in the singular agrees with *adspiratio daemonum*; much less probably it might refer to

story how certain angels corrupted themselves and how from them was produced a brood of demons yet more corrupt, condemned by God with the authors of their race and that prince whom we have named—all this is duly made known in the sacred books.<sup>a</sup> Here 4 and now it will be enough to explain how they go to work. Their work is the ruin of man; thus spiritual wickedness from the very beginning designed the destruction of man. So on men's bodies they inflict sicknesses and other bitter calamities, and on the soul sudden extravagant bursts of violence. To assail both sides of man's nature their subtle and impalpable substance avails them. Much is possible to the 5 might of these spirits, so that, undetected by sight or sense, they are recognized more in the consequences of their action than in their action itself; as when some obscure blight lays fruit and crop low when still in flower, takes life out of the bud, or wounds them in their full growth, and when the air is tainted in some unseen way and sweeps down with wafts of pestilence.<sup>b</sup> By a contagion similar in its 6 obscurity the breath of demons and angels achieves the corruption of the mind in foul bursts of fury and insanity, or in savage lusts, along with every kind of delusion; and of all delusions that is the greatest which they use to recommend those gods to the captive and outwitted minds of men—and it also serves to secure for themselves their peculiar diet of smell and blood, offered to their likenesses and images. And what fare more exquisite for them,<sup>c</sup> 7 than by false sleights to turn man from contempla-

the prince of the demons. As there is no doubt about the general sense, the correction, though easier to translate literally, seems hardly needed.

## TERTULLIAN

cogitatu verae divinitatis avertat praestigiis falsis ?  
Quas et ipsas quomodo operetur expediam.

- 8 Omnis spiritus ales est. Hoc angeli et daemones. Igitur momento ubique sunt ; totus orbis illis locus unus est ; quid ubi geratur tam facile sciunt quam adnuntiant. Velocitas divinitas creditur, quia substantia ignoratur. Sic et auctores interdum videri  
9 volunt eorum quae adnuntiant. Et sunt plane malorum nonnunquam, bonorum tamen nunquam. Dispositiones etiam dei et tunc prophetis contionantibus exceperunt<sup>1</sup> et nunc lectionibus resonantibus carpunt. Ita et hinc sumentes quasdam temporum sortes aemulantur divinitatem, dum furantur divinationem.  
10 In oraculis autem quo ingenio ambiguitates temperent in eventus sciunt Croesi, sciunt Pyrrhi. Ceterum testudinem decoqui cum carnibus pecudis Pythius eo modo renuntiavit quo supra diximus ; momento apud Lydiam fuerat. Habent de incolatu aëris et de vicinia siderum et de commercio nubium caelestes sapere paraturas, ut et pluvias, quas iam sentiunt,  
11 repromittant. Benefici<sup>2</sup> plane et circa curas valitudinum. Laedunt enim primo, dehinc remedia praeci-  
12 pinunt ad miraculum nova sive contraria, post quae desinunt laedere, et curasse creduntur. Quid ergo de ceteris ingeniis vel etiam viribus fallaciae spiritalis

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler reads* excerptunt.

<sup>2</sup> *The codex Fuldensis reads* venefici. *I take this as a typical case of ms. confusion. What irony can be in venefici? It seems a safe rule with Tertullian to prefer the more pungent and satirical variant whatever the ms. attestation.*

---

<sup>a</sup> Four syllables of assonance cannot be unintentional in Tertullian.

<sup>b</sup> He refers to the two famous oracles—*Κροῖσος Ἄλυν διαβάς μεγάλην ἀρχὴν καταλύσει* (Herodotus i. 53; Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, iii. 5. 4, p. 1407 a), and *Αἰὼ τε Αἰακίδε Ῥωμαῖος νικῆσει*

tion of true deity? These false sleights I will explain, and how they work them.

Every spirit is winged; so it is with angels, so it is with demons. Thus in a moment they are everywhere; all the world is to them one spot; what is being done, and where, it is as easy for them to know as to tell. Their swiftness passes for divinity, because their real nature is unknown. So they sometimes wish to appear as doing what they merely report; and they obviously are at times the authors of mischief but never of good. The purposes of God they caught up *then* as they heard the prophets propound, *now* when they hear the lesson resound.<sup>a</sup> It is thus, it is from these sources, that they have learnt certain appointed dates and times, and on stolen divination affect divinity. In the matter of oracles how ingeniously they can fit ambiguity to event, a Croesus, a Pyrrhus knows.<sup>b</sup> But the boiling of the tortoise with the flesh of the lamb Apollo reported, by the method we have described; in a moment he had been in Lydia. They have their abode in the air, the stars are their neighbours, their commerce is with the clouds, so they can learn what is preparing in the sky and promise the rain, which they feel already. Mighty kind they are too in the treatment of diseases! First, they injure; then, they teach remedies new or contradictory to the point of miracle; after that they cease to injure and are believed to have healed. But why should I discuss the rest of their tricks, or the *posse* (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, ii. 56. 115, who just above translates the Greek "Croesus Halym penetrans magnam pervertet opum vim"). Apollo, so says Herodotus, i. 47, 48, alone among gods who give oracles, told Croesus that he had been boiling the things named, at the precise hour fixed.

## TERTULLIAN

edisseram? phantasmata Castorum, et aquam cribro gestatam, et navem cingulo promotam, et barbam tactu inrufatam, ut numina lapides crederentur, ut deus verus non quaereretur?

- 1 XXIII. Porro, si et magi phantasmata edunt et iam defunctorum infamant animas, si pueros in eloquium oraculi elidunt, si multa miracula circulatoriis praestigiis ludunt, si et somnia immittunt habentes semel invitatorum angelorum et daemonum adsistentem sibi potestatem, per quos et caprae et mensae divinare consuerunt, quanto magis ea potestas de suo arbitrio et pro suo negotio studeat totis viribus
- 2 operari quod alienae praestat negotiationi! Aut si eadem et angeli et daemones operantur quae et dei vestri, ubi est ergo praecellentia divinitatis, quam utique superiorem omni potestate credendum est? Non ergo dignius praesumetur ipsos esse qui se deos faciant, cum eadem edant quae faciant deos credi, quam pares angelis et daemonibus deos esse?
- 3 Locorum differentia distinguitur, opinor, ut a templis deos existimetis quos alibi deos non dicitis; ut aliter dementire videatur qui sacras turres pervolat, aliter qui tecta viciniae transilit, et alia vis pronuntietur in eo qui genitalia vel lacertos, alia qui sibi gulam

---

<sup>a</sup> These stories are to be found in Valerius Maximus, i. 8. 1 (the twins); viii. 5. 1 (the sieve); Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 305 ff. (the girdle); Suetonius, *Nero*, 1 (the red beard).



power of spiritual treachery? or tell of apparitions of the Heavenly Twins, of water carried in a sieve, of a ship towed with a girdle, a beard made red with a touch <sup>a</sup>—and all of it, that stones may be believed to be gods and the true God left unsought?

XXIII. To proceed, if magicians produce phantoms 1 and give a bad name to the souls of the dead; if they kill children to make an oracle speak; if by mountebank tricks they play off no end of miracles; if they send dreams to people; assisted by the power of the angels and demons invoked, those same beings by whose aid she-goats and tables have acquired the habit of divining; how much more, think you? would that power, acting on its own behalf and in its own business, take pains to use its full strength to achieve what it does in the affairs of others? Or, if 2 angels and demons do exactly what your gods do; where, then, is the pre-eminence of divinity, which we surely should count superior to every other power? Will it not be a worthier supposition that it is they who make themselves into gods when they do what wins credence for gods, than that gods should be on a level with angels and demons? The distinction 3 between them, I really suppose, depends on difference of place; so that, where a temple is in the story, you reckon them to be gods, though elsewhere you do not call them gods; so that if a man leaps among the temple towers he has a different sort of insanity from one who jumps from roof to roof of his neighbours' houses; so that a different influence is declared to be at work in the man who castrates himself or slashes his muscles,<sup>b</sup> from what is in the

<sup>b</sup> A touch at the priests of Cybele. Cf. Apuleius, *Met.* viii. 27.

## TERTULLIAN

prosecat. Compar exitus furoris et una ratio est instigationis.

- 4 Sed hactenus verba ; iam hinc demonstratio rei ipsius, qua ostendemus unam esse utriusque nominis qualitatem. Edatur hic aliqui ibidem<sup>a</sup> sub tribunalibus vestris quem daemone agi constet. Iussus a quolibet Christiano loqui spiritus ille tam se daemonem confitebitur de vero quam alibi dominum de  
5 falso. Aequè producatur aliquis ex his qui de deo pati existimantur, qui aris inhalantes numen de nidore concipiunt, qui ructando curantur, qui anhelando praefan-  
6 tur. Ista ipsa Virgo Caelestis pluviarum pollicitatrix, ipse iste Aesculapius medicinarum demonstrator, alia die morituris Socordio et Tenatio et Asclepiodoto sumministrator, nisi se daemones confessi fuerint Christiano mentiri non audentes, ibidem illius  
7 Christiani procacissimi sanguinem fundite ! Quid isto opere manifestius ? Quid hac probatione fidelius ? Simplicitas veritatis in medio est. Virtus illi sua adsistit ; nihil suspicari licebit. Magia aut aliqua eiusmodi fallacia fieri dicitis ? Non dicetis, si oculi  
8 vestri et aures permiserint vobis. Quid autem inici potest adversus id quod ostenditur nuda sinceritate ?

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 77 ; Apuleius, *Met.* viii. 27.

<sup>b</sup> *Virgo Caelestis* is the Juno of Carthage, familiar in a rather Roman style in the *Aeneid*, but originally more like, if not identical with, the Astarte or Ashtoreth of the Phoenicians. Cf. ch. 22. 10 for the explanation of the power of a demon (or goddess) to promise rain.

<sup>c</sup> The translation ignores Oehler's two emendations *aliam diem, sumministraturi*, and follows ms. *alia die sumministrator*. The commentators tell me nothing of these three people, and I can add no more. They are restorations from hopeless ms. confusion. One commentator even suggests that they\* are herbs ! *Scordium* was a plant found in

man who cuts his throat. But the outcome of the frenzy is the same, and one account must be given of its provocation.

So far, words; now for a test in actual fact, to show that, whichever names you use, the nature (*qualitas*) is the same. Produce someone before your tribunals, who is admittedly demon-possessed. Let any Christian you please bid him speak, and the spirit in the man will own himself a demon—and truly—just as he will elsewhere call himself a god, falsely. Similarly bring forward some one or other of those persons who are supposed to be god-possessed,<sup>a</sup> who by sniffing at altars inhale a divine power in the smell, who cure themselves by belching, who declaim panting. Let us take your great Virgin of Heaven herself,<sup>b</sup> promiser of rain, your great Aesculapius, discoverer of medical arts, giver of life to Socordius, Thanatius, Asclepiodotus (who will die some other day all the same<sup>c</sup>)—if they do not confess they are demons, not daring to lie to a Christian, then shed that impudent Christian's blood on the spot! What could be plainer than such a deed? What proof more reliable? The simplicity of the truth is plain to see. Its own power is in it. There can be no room for suspicion. Oh! do you say it is done by magic or some trickery of that sort? You will not say that, even if your eyes and ears let you.<sup>d</sup> But what can be set against fact displayed in naked

Pontus, and used to make antidotes; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxv. 6. 63. Oehler thinks Tertullian may refer to a past event; but he seems to be devising a test to be tried. Waltzing translates very much as above.

<sup>a</sup> The text again doubtful, and restored, without much gain. The translation is mere makeshift.

## TERTULLIAN

- Si altera parte vere dei sunt, cur sese daemonia mentiuntur? An ut nobis obsequantur? Iam ergo subiecta est Christianis divinitas vestra, nec divinitas deputanda est quae subdita est homini et, si quid ad  
9 dedecus facit, aemulis suis. Si altera parte daemones sunt vel angeli, cur se alibi pro deis agere respondent? Nam sicut illi qui dei habentur daemones se dicere nolissent, si vere dei essent, scilicet ne se de maiestate deponerent, ita et isti, quos directo daemones nostis, non auderent alibi pro deis agere, si aliqui omnino dei essent, quorum nominibus utuntur. Vererentur enim abuti maiestate superiore sine dubio  
10 et timendorum. Adeo nulla est divinitas ista quam tenetis, quia, si esset, neque a daemoniis adfectaretur in confessione neque a deis negaretur. Cum ergo utraque pars concurrit in confessionem deos esse negans, agnoscite unum genus esse, id est daemones, verum utrobique.
- 11 Iam deos quaerite. Quos enim praesumpseratis, daemones esse cognoscitis. Eadem vero opera nostra ab eisdem deis vestris non tantum hoc detegentibus quod neque ipsi dei sint neque ulli alii, etiam illud in continenti cognoscitis, qui sit vere deus, et an ille et an unicus quem Christiani profitemur, et an ita credendus colendusque, ut fides, ut disciplina disposita est Christianorum.
- 12 Dicent ibidem: Et quis ille Christus cum sua fabula;

---

<sup>a</sup> He means that some Christian will compel the demons not only to confess that they are not gods but to acknowledge the God of the Christians.

sincerity? If on the one hand they really *are* gods, why do they lie and say they are demons? To oblige *us*? So you see, divinity, as you understand it, is subject to Christians, but I don't think it is really to be reckoned divinity if it is subject to a man, and (if anything can add to the disgrace) to its rivals. If, 9 on the other hand, they are demons or angels, why do they reply that elsewhere they act the part of gods? For just as those beings which pass for gods would have been reluctant to call themselves demons, if they really were gods,—they would not wish, of course, to abdicate their majesty!—so those creatures, whom you definitely know to be demons, would not dare elsewhere to pass themselves off as gods, if those whose names they use were gods at all. For they would be afraid to misuse a majesty beyond doubt above them, the majesty of powers they feared. So 10 that divinity, which you maintain, is nothing of the kind; because, if it were divinity, the demons, when confessing, would not claim it, nor the gods disclaim it. So when both groups concur in confession, when both deny godhead, recognize that it is only one group—demons, on the one side and on the other.

So now try to find gods! Those whom you had 11 presumed to be gods, you learn to be demons. Once more we lend you aid <sup>a</sup>; and from these same gods of yours, who have more to disclose than the fact that neither they nor any others are gods, there is another thing for you to learn at one and the same time, that is, who really is God, whether it is He, and only He, whom we Christians confess, and whether He requires belief and worship, on the lines of the faith and teaching of Christians.

They will also tell you, on the spot, who is “that 12

## TERTULLIAN

- Si homo communis conditionis, si magus, si post mortem de sepulchro a discipulis subreptus, si nunc denique penes inferos, si non in caelis potius, et inde venturus cum totius mundi motu, cum orbis horrore, cum planctu omnium, sed non Christianorum, ut dei virtus et dei spiritus et sermo et sapientia et ratio  
 13 et dei filius.<sup>1</sup> Quodcunque ridetis, rideant et illi vobiscum ; negent Christum omnem ab aevo animam restituto corpore iudicaturum, dicant hoc pro tribunali, si forte, Minoem et Rhadamanthum secundum consensum Platonis et poetarum hoc esse sortitos ;  
 14 suae saltim ignominiae et damnationis notam refutent. Renuntiant<sup>2</sup> se immundos spiritus esse, quod vel ex pabulis eorum, sanguine et fumo et putidis rogis pecorum, et impuratissimis linguis ipsorum vatum intellegi debuit : renuant ob malitiam praedamnatos se in eundem iudicii diem cum omnibus cultoribus et operationibus suis.
- 15 Atquin omnis haec nostra in illos dominatio et potestas de nominatione Christi valet et de commemoratione eorum quae sibi a deo per arbitrum Christum imminetia expectant. Christum timentes in deo et deum in Christo subiciuntur servis dei et  
 16 Christi. Ita de contactu deque afflatu nostro, contemplatione et repraesentatione ignis illius correpti

<sup>1</sup> *From these six short si clauses, I have removed the question-marks which Oehler prints.*

<sup>2</sup> *Some editors substitute renuant here from the codex Fuldensis, which is attractive in keeping the succession of jussive subjunctives. renuntiant has this defence, that the demons have already confessed to being demons ; the only new point about them is that they too are doomed to judgement.*

---

<sup>a</sup> Will the demons merely echo the common talk of the opponents of Christianity?

Christ with his story"—whether he was a man of the common sort; whether he was a magician; whether, after his death, his disciples stole him from the grave; whether he is now, in a word, down among the dead,<sup>a</sup> and not rather in heaven, thence to come, amid the upheaval of the whole universe, the horror of the world, the wailing of all men (but not of the Christians!)—to come as Power of God, Spirit of God, Word, Wisdom, Reason, Son of God? Laugh at what you will<sup>b</sup>— 13 but let them (the demons) laugh with you! let them deny that Christ will judge every soul since time began, with its body given back to it! let them say, before your court, that Minos perchance and Rhadamanthus, as Plato and the poets agree, have this function! Let them at least get rid of the 14 brand of humiliation and damnation set upon them! They tell you that they are unclean spirits—as ought to have been understood even from their diet, the blood, the smoke, the stinking holocausts of dead beasts—and the defiled tongues of their prophets! Let them deny that for their sin they are condemned already against that same Day of Judgement, they and all their worshippers and all their works!

Yet all this sovereignty and power that we have 15 over them derives its force only from the naming of Christ, and the reminder of what they expect to come upon them from God at the judgement-seat of Christ. They are afraid of Christ in God, and of God in Christ; and that is why they are subject to the servants of God and Christ. Thus at a touch, a 16 breath from us, they are seized by the thought, by

<sup>b</sup> Cf. the allusion to laughter at the mention of the Judgement Day, ch. 18. 4.

## TERTULLIAN

- etiam de corporibus nostro imperio excedunt inviti et dolentes et vobis praesentibus erubescences. Credite illis, cum verum de se loquuntur, qui mentientibus creditis. Nemo ad suum dedecus mentitur, quin  
 17 potius ad honorem. Magis fides proxima est adversus semetipsos confitentes quam pro semetipsis negantes.  
 18 Haec denique testimonia deorum vestrorum Christianos facere consuerunt; quam plurimum illis credendo in Christo domino credimus. Ipsi litterarum nostrarum fidem accendunt, ipsi spei nostrae fidentiam  
 19 aedificant. Colitis illos, quod sciam, etiam de sanguine Christianorum. Nollent itaque vos tam fructuosos, tam officiosos sibi amittere, vel ne a vobis quandoque Christianis<sup>1</sup> fugentur, si illis sub Christiano, volente vobis veritatem probare, mentiri liceret.  
 1 XXIV. Omnis ista confessio illorum qua se deos negant esse quaque non alium deum respondent praeter unum, cui nos mancipamur, satis idonea est ad depellendum crimen laesae maxime Romanae religionis. Si enim non sunt dei pro certo, nec religio pro certo est: si religio non est, quia nec dei pro certo, nec nos pro certo rei sumus laesae religionis.  
 2 At e contrario in vos exprobratio resultavit, qui mendacium colentes veram religionem veri dei non modo neglegendo, quin insuper expugnando, in verum  
 3 committitis crimen verae inreligiositatis.

Nunc ut constaret illos deos esse, nonne conceditis

<sup>1</sup> Oehler, with the Paris ms., reads a Christianis. Those who keep this text seem to take a vobis to mean "out of you."

<sup>a</sup> "Crimen laesae religionis" is perhaps Tertullian's own coining after the model of a more familiar phrase, amplified in ch. 28. <sup>2</sup> "titulum laesae augustioris maiestatis." Trajan was unwilling "criminibus maiestatis reverentiam nomini meo adquiri"; Pliny, *Epp.* x. 82.



the foretaste of that fire, and they leave the bodies of men at our command, all against their will, in pain, blushing to have you witness it. Believe them when they tell the truth about themselves, you who believe them when they lie ! No one lies simply to 17 bring disgrace on himself—no, much rather to win credit. It is much easier to believe people when they confess against themselves than when they deny to defend themselves.

This kind of witness, then, offered by your gods 18 regularly makes Christians. The more we believe them, the more we believe in Christ as Lord. They kindle our faith in our sacred books ; they build up our assurance in our hope. You worship them (to the 19 best of my knowledge) with the blood of Christians. So they would not wish to lose you, when you are so profitable, so obsequious, to them,—lest you, too, perhaps, turning Christian some day should drive them out !—they would not indeed ! if only they might lie, when a Christian wishes to prove the truth to you !

XXIV. All this confession of theirs, their avowal 1 that they are not gods, their response that there is no God but the One whose servants we are, is amply enough to repel the charge brought against us of treason above all to the religion of Rome.<sup>a</sup> If they definitely are not gods, then definitely it is not a religion ; if it is not a religion because they definitely are not gods, then we are definitely not guilty of injuring religion. On the contrary the taunt has 2 recoiled upon you, who, by your worship of a lie, by your neglect of the true religion of the true God—and more than that—by your assault upon it, commit against the true God the crime of real irreligion.

Now, suppose them to be gods ; but you concede, 3

## TERTULLIAN

de aestimatione communi aliquem esse sublimiorem et potentio-rem, velut principem mundi perfectae potentiae et maiestatis? Nam et sic plerique disponunt divinitatem, ut imperium summae dominationis esse penes unum, officia eius penes multos velint, ut Plato Iovem magnum in caelo comitatum exercitu describit  
4 deorum pariter et daemonum. Itaque oportere et procurantes et praefectos et praesides pariter suspici. Et tamen quod facinus admittit qui magis ad Caesarem promerendum et operam et spem suam transfert nec appellationem dei ita ut imperatoris in aliquo principe confitetur, cum capitale esse iudicetur alium praeter  
5 Caesarem et dicere et audire? Colat alius deum, alius Iovem, alius ad caelum manus supplices tendat, alius ad aram Fidei, alius, si hoc putatis, nubes numeret orans, alius lacunaria, alius suam animam deo suo  
6 voveat, alius hirci. Videte enim ne et hoc ad in-  
religiositatis elogium concurrat, adimere libertatem religionis et interdicere optionem divinitatis, ut non liceat mihi colere quem velim, sed cogar colere quem nolim. Nemo se ab invito coli volet, ne homo quidem.  
7 Atque adeo et Aegyptiis permissa est tam vanae superstitionis potestas avibus et bestiis consecrandis et capite damnandis qui aliquem huiusmodi deum occiderit. Unicuique etiam provinciae et civitati suus deus est, ut Syriae Astartes, ut Arabiae Dusares, ut Noricis Belenus, ut Africae Caelestis, ut Mauri-

---

<sup>a</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246 E.

<sup>b</sup> The sentence seems a little syncopated, but the meaning is not hard to disentangle.

<sup>c</sup> As they said the Christians did. Cf. Juvenal, xiv. 96, on Jewish worship.

<sup>d</sup> *v.l.* Atargatis.

do you not, on the basis of common consent, that there is a god, more sublime and more potent, Emperor as it were of the universe, of absolute power and majesty? For that is how most men apporportion divinity; they hold that the control, the supreme sway, rests with one, the various functions of divinity among many. Plato,<sup>a</sup> for instance, describes the great Jove in heaven accompanied by a host of gods and demons together. So they hold that his procurators and prefects and presiding officers should be respected equally with him. And yet what crime does he commit, who, to win Caesar's favour more securely, transfers his attention and his hope elsewhere, and does not confess that the title of God, like that of Emperor, belongs to one supreme over all,<sup>b</sup> when it is legally a capital offence to speak of another beside Caesar or even to listen to such talk? Let 5 one man worship God, another Jove; let this man raise suppliant hands to heaven, that man to the altar of Fides; let one (if you so suppose) count the clouds as he prays,<sup>c</sup> another the panels of the ceiling; let one dedicate his own soul to his god, another a goat's. Look to it, whether this also may form part of the 6 accusation of irreligion—to do away with freedom of religion, to forbid a man choice of deity, so that I may not worship whom I would, but am forced to worship whom I would not. No one, not even a man, will wish to receive reluctant worship.

Why, the Egyptians are allowed full freedom in 7 their empty superstition, to make gods of birds and beasts, and to condemn to death any who may kill a god of that sort. Every individual province, every city, has its own god; Syria has Astartes <sup>a</sup>; Arabia, Dusares; the Norici Belenus; Africa, her Heavenly

## TERTULLIAN

- 8 taniae reguli sui. Romanas, ut opinor, provincias edidi, nec tamen Romanos deos earum, quia Romae non magis coluntur quam qui per ipsam quoque Italiam municipali consecratione censentur : Casinensium Delventinus, Narniensium Visidianus, Asculanorum Ancharia, Volsiniensium Nortia, Oriculanorum Valentia, Sutrinorum Hostia ; Faliscorum in honorem
- 9 Patris Curis et accepit cognomen Iuno. Sed nos soli arcemur a religionis proprietate. Laedimus Romanos nec Romani habemur qui non Romanorum deum
- 10 colimus. Bene quod omnium deus est, cuius velimus aut nolimus omnes sumus. Sed apud vos quodvis colere ius est praeter deum verum, quasi non hic magis omnium sit deus cuius omnes sumus.
- 1 XXV. Satis quidem mihi videor probasse de falsa et vera divinitate, cum demonstravi quemadmodum probatio consistat, non modo disputationibus, nec argumentationibus, sed ipsorum etiam testimoniis quos deos creditis, ut nihil iam ad hanc causam
- 2 sit retractandum. Quoniam tamen Romani nominis proprie mentio occurrit, non omittam congressionem, quam provocat illa praesumptio dicentium Romanos pro merito religiositatis diligentissimae in tantum sublimitatis elatos, ut orbem occuparint, et adeo deos esse, ut praeter ceteros floreant qui illis officium praeter ceteros faciant.
- 3 Scilicet ista merces a Romanis deis pro gratia ex-

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Minucius Felix, 21. 9.

<sup>b</sup> Curis, Curitis, or Quiritis. Cf. Macrobius, i. 9. 16 "hastam quam Sabini curin vocant." (So Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 477.)

<sup>c</sup> Cf. Cicero, *De Haruspicum Responsis*, 9. 19, where, in a speech and therefore appealing to a public that will agree, Cicero says that the Romans did not surpass the Spaniards in number, the Carthaginians in cunning, the Italians in

Virgin ; Mauretania its chieftains.<sup>a</sup> These provinces 8  
that I mention are, I think, Roman ; but their gods  
are not Roman ; for they are not worshipped at Rome  
any more than the gods honoured in Italy itself by  
municipal deification—such as Delventinus at Casi-  
num, Visidianus at Narnia, Ancharia at Asculum,  
Nortia at Volsinii, Valentia at Oriculum, Hostia at  
Sutrium ; while among the Falisci, in honour of  
Father Curis, Juno has the surname <sup>b</sup> too. But we 9  
alone are forbidden a religion of our own. We injure  
the Romans, we are reckoned not to be Romans,  
because we do not worship the god of the Romans.  
Happy it is that God is God of all, and that all of us 10  
are His, whether we would wish it or not. But among  
you it is lawful to worship anything at all, so long as  
it is not the true God !—as if He were not rather God  
of all, whose we all are.

XXV. I think I have proved enough as to false 1  
and true deity. I have shown how the proof hangs  
together consistently, resting as it does not only on  
discussion and argument, but on the evidence of those  
beings whom you believe to be gods ; so that there is  
nothing more to be dealt with on that issue. Yet, 2  
since specific mention has been made of the Roman  
name, I must not shirk the encounter challenged by  
the assumption of those who say it is as a reward for  
their eminently religious attitude that the Romans  
have reached so high a point of grandeur as to hold the  
whole world <sup>c</sup> ; and that the gods are so conspicuously  
gods that those flourish beyond all others who beyond  
all others render them obedience.

I understand, then, this reward has been paid by the 3  
commonsense (their peculiar gift), but won their empire over  
the world “ pietate et religione.” Cf. *De Nat. Deorum*, ii. 3. 8.

## TERTULLIAN

pensa est. Sterculus et Mutunus et Larentina provexit imperium. Peregrinos enim deos non putem extraneae genti magis fautum voluisse quam suae, et patrium solum, in quo nati, adulti, nobilitati sepultique sunt, 4 transfretanis dedisse. Viderit Cybele, si urbem Romanam ut memoriam Troiani generis adamavit, vernaculi sui scilicet adversus Achivorum arma protecti, si ad ultores transire prospexit, quos sciebat Graeciam 5 Phrygiae debellatricem subacturos. Itaque maiestatis suae in urbem conlatae grande documentum nostra etiam aetate proposuit, cum Marco Aurelio apud Sirmium reipublicae exempto die sexto decimo Kalendarum Aprilium archigallus ille sanctissimus die nono Kalendarum earundem, quo sanguinem inpurum laceratos quoque castrando libabat, pro salute imperatoris Marci iam intercepti solita aequae imperia mandavit. 6 O nuntios tardos ! o somniculosa diplomata ! quorum vitio excessum imperatoris non ante Cybele cognovit, 7 ne deam talem riderent Christiani. Sed non statim et Iupiter Cretam suam Romanis fascibus concutineret, oblitus antrum illud Idaeum et aera Corybantia et iocundissimum illic nutricis suae odorem. Nonne omni Capitolio tumultum illum suum prae-

---

<sup>a</sup> The god of dung : Mutunus of sexual intercourse : Larentina, *cf.* ch. 13. 9. These are native Roman divinities.

<sup>b</sup> *Cf.* p. 330 n.

<sup>c</sup> See Dio Cassius, lxxii. 33 (Loeb text, vol. ix. p. 60).

<sup>d</sup> The *dies sanguinis*, *cf.* Trebellius Pollio, *Life of Claudius* 4 (in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*).

<sup>e</sup> The goat Amalthea ; *cf.* p. 383 n.

<sup>f</sup> Another reference to the theory that the gods had been originally men (ch. 10. 11) and to the reported grave of Zeus in Crete. *Cf.* Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, iii. 21. 53, who speaks of three Jupiters, "tertium Cretensem Saturni filium, cuius in illa insula sepulcrum ostenditur" (*ib.* i. 41. 119

Roman gods on the score of gratitude. Sterculus<sup>a</sup> has extended their empire,—and Mutunus, and Larentina! For as to foreign gods, I would not suppose they preferred to favour an alien race rather than their own, and that they surrendered to men from across the sea their own native soil on which they were born, reared, ennobled, and in which they were buried. Let Cybele<sup>b</sup> see to it, if she have loved the city<sup>4</sup> of Rome in memory of the Trojan race, her own native race that she guarded against the arms of the Achaeans—if she looked ahead and planned to pass over to the avengers' camp, knowing that they would yet subdue Greece, conqueror of Phrygia! So it<sup>5</sup> was indeed a fine proof of her greatness transferred to Rome that she offered in our own generation. The State lost Marcus Aurelius by death at Sirmium on the 17th of March<sup>c</sup>; but on the 24th,<sup>d</sup> his holiness the arch-eunuch, offering his own unclean blood and slashing his muscles, issued the usual orders to pray for the safety of Marcus, who was already dead. O sluggish messengers! O sleepy-headed<sup>6</sup> postal service! it was your fault that Cybele failed to hear earlier of the Emperor's death, to prevent Christians from laughing at such a goddess! Jupiter too would hardly be in a hurry to let his own<sup>7</sup> Crete tumble before the Roman fasces—forgetting that cave on Ida, the cymbals of the Corybantes, that too delicious odour of his nurse<sup>e</sup> there! Would not he have preferred that grave of his<sup>f</sup> to any Capitol, on this theory of Euhemerus and graves of gods). Compare also Callimachus:

Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται, καὶ γὰρ τάφον, ᾧ ἄνα, σείο

Κρήτες ἐτεκτῆναντο· σὺ δ' οὐ θάνης, ἔσσι γὰρ αλεῖ,

quoted by Origen, *Against Celsus*, iii. 43. Lactantius, i. 11, says the grave bore the inscription ZAN KRONOY.

## TERTULLIAN

posuisset, ut ea potius orbi terra<sup>1</sup> praeccelleret quae  
8 cineres Iovis texit? Vellet Iuno Punicam urbem  
posthabita Samo dilectam ab Aeneadarum gente  
deleri? Quod sciam

hic illius arma,  
hic currus fuit, hoc regnum dea gentibus esse,  
si qua fata sinant, iam tum tenditque fovetque.

Misera illa coniunx Iovis et soror adversus fata non  
valuit! Plane

fato stat Iupiter ipse.

9 Nec tantum tamen honoris fatis Romani dicaverunt  
dedentibus sibi Carthaginem adversus destinatum  
votumque Iunonis quantum prostitutissimae lupae  
Larentinae.

10 Plures deos vestros regnasse certum est. Igitur si  
conferendi imperii tenent potestatem, cum ipsi  
regnarent, a quibus acceperant eam gratiam? Quem  
coluerat Saturnus et Iupiter? Aliquem, opinor,  
Sterculum. Sed postea Romani cum indigitamentis  
11 suis.<sup>2</sup> Etiam si qui non regnaverunt, tamen regna-  
bantur ab aliis nondum cultoribus suis, ut qui  
nondum dei habebantur. Ergo aliorum est regnum

<sup>1</sup> terra is an emendation: Oehler prints terrae.

<sup>2</sup> Here I have left Oehler, who reads cum indigenis suis,  
and distributes the punctuation differently.

<sup>a</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, i. 16.

<sup>b</sup> *Aeneid*, i. 16-18.

<sup>c</sup> *Aeneid*, i. 47.

<sup>d</sup> The text is uncertain; one ms. has *inditamentis*, another *indignis*. If the restoration above is right, Tertullian swings off from Sterculus to say in an aside that the Romans and their catalogues of gods (see Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 21) or indigenous gods, belong to a later date. In §§ 10, 11 he deals with the argument that the gods bestowed empire. How could they, if they had not empire to bestow? Either they were or were not kings. Those who were kings, who



that the world should bow to the land which covered the ashes of Jove? Would Juno wish the Punic 8 city that she loved "yea, above Samos' self,"<sup>a</sup> to be destroyed by the race of Aeneas of all people? To the best of my knowledge

Here were her arms,  
Her chariot here; this city, the world's queen  
Yet to become, if but the fates allow,  
The goddess cherishes.<sup>b</sup>

Poor "wife of Jove and sister,"<sup>c</sup> she could do nothing against the fates! Obviously

By fate Jove's self must stand.

Yet somehow the Romans have not paid so much 9 honour to the fates that gave them Carthage, clean against the plan and prayer of Juno, as to that strumpet of a she-wolf, Larentina.

It is established that several of your gods once 10 were kings. If then they possess the power of bestowing empire, seeing they were kings, from whom did they receive that privilege? Whom had Saturn worshipped, and Jove? Some Sterculus or other, I presume. (The Romans came later with their catalogues of gods.) Further if some of the gods were 11 not kings, they were reigned over by others, who were not yet their worshippers—for they were not yet reckoned to be gods.<sup>d</sup> It follows that it belongs to

made them kings and gave them such rights? But some were not kings at all, and were reigned over by others who did not worship them, as they were not yet deified. But if there were kings before these gods were gods, the right to bestow empire rests, not with the gods, but elsewhere. This clears out Saturn and his family. *Tamen* remains to perplex reader and translator, and more desperate remedies may be needed for the text.

## TERTULLIAN

dare, quia regnabatur multo ante quam isti dei inciderentur.

- 12 Sed quam vanum est fastigium Romani nominis religiositatis meritis deputare, cum post imperium sive adhuc regnum religio profecerit.<sup>1</sup> Nam etsi a Numa concepta est curiositas superstitiosa, nondum tamen aut simulacris aut templis res divina apud Romanos
- 13 constabat. Frugi religio et pauperes ritus et nulla Capitolia certantia ad caelum, sed temeraria de cespite altaria, et vasa adhuc Samia, et nidor ex illis,<sup>2</sup> et deus ipse nusquam. Nondum enim tunc ingenia Graecorum atque Tuscorum fingendis simulacris urbem inundaverant. Ergo non ante religiosi Romani quam magni, ideoque non ob hoc magni, quia religiosi.
- 14 Atquin quomodo ob religionem magni, quibus magnitudo de inreligiositate provenit? Ni fallor enim, omne regnum vel imperium bellis quaeritur et victoriis propagatur. Porro bella et victoriae captis et eversis plurimum urbibus constant. Id negotium sine deorum iniuria non est. Eaedem strages moenium et templorum, pares caedes civium et sacerdotum, nec dissimiles rapinae sacrarum divitiarum et profanarum.
- 15 Tot igitur sacrilegia Romanorum quot tropaea, tot de deis quot de gentibus triumpho, tot manubiae quot
- 16 manent adhuc simulacra captivorum deorum. Et ab hostibus ergo suis sustinent adorari et illis imperium sine fine decernunt quorum magis iniurias quam

<sup>1</sup> *After profecerit Oehler reads Age iam rebus religio profecerit? The Fuldensis and some editors put this sentence in a further form Auctis age iam rebus (which is more intelligible) before the Sed quam vanum sentence. Rauschen (whom I follow here) takes it as a gloss and deletes it from the text altogether. It is not much needed.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Fuldensis gives exilis, "not very much smell."*

others to bestow kingship, since there were kings long before those gods had their names carved on stone.

But how absurd it is to set down the glory of the 12 Roman name as the reward of religious feeling, when it is only since the empire (or perhaps it was still kingdom) was achieved, that the religion made its forward strides! Even if that nicety in superstition was conceived by Numa, not yet among the Romans did service of the gods rest on images or temples. It was frugal religion, the rites of poverty, no 13 Capitol vying with the sky, but chance altars of turf, pottery still Samian, and the smell rising from the pots,—and the god himself nowhere! Not yet had men of genius, Greek and Tuscan, flooded the city, to make images. So the Romans were not “religious” before they were great; and, it follows, they are not great because they were religious. How 14 could they be great because of their religion, when their greatness came from irreligion? Unless I am mistaken, all kingship or empire is sought in war and extended by victory. War and victory depend on the capture and generally the overthrow of cities. That business is not put through, without injury to the gods. Walls and temples have one destruction; citizens and priests alike are slain; the plunder of wealth is the same whether it is sacred property or that of laymen. Then the sacrileges of the 15 Romans are exactly as many as their trophies; their triumphs over gods as many as over races; their spoils in war as many as the statues still left of captured gods. And (we are told) the gods can 16 bear to be adored by their enemies and decree to them “empire sans end”<sup>a</sup>—when they ought to have

<sup>a</sup> *Aeneid*, i. 279.

## TERTULLIAN

adolationes remunerasse debuerant. Sed qui nihil sentiunt tam impune laeduntur quam frustra coluntur.

17 Certe non potest fidei convenire, ut religionis meritis excrevisse videantur qui, ut suggessimus, religionem aut laedendo creverunt aut crescendo laeserunt. Etiam illi quorum regna conflata sunt in imperii Romanii summam, cum ea amitterent, sine religionibus non fuerunt.

1 XXVI. Videte igitur, ne ille regna dispenset cuius est et orbis qui regnatur et homo ipse qui regnat, ne ille vices dominationum ipsis temporibus in saeculo ordinarit qui ante omne tempus fuit et saeculum corpus temporum fecit, ne ille civitates extollat aut deprimat sub quo fuit sine civitatibus aliquando gens  
2 hominum. Quid erratis? prior est quibusdam deis suis silvestris Roma, ante regnavit quam tantum ambitum Capitolii extrueret. Regnaverant et Babylonii ante Pontifices, et Medi ante Quindecimviros, et Aegyptii ante Salios, et Assyrii ante Lupercos, et  
3 Amazones ante Virgines Vestales. Postremo si Romanae religiones regna praestant, nunquam retro Iudaea regnasset despectrix communium istarum divinitatum, cuius et deum victimis et templum donis et gentem foederibus aliquamdiu Romani honorastis, numquam dominaturi eius, si<sup>1</sup> non deliquisset ultimo in Christum.

1 XXVII. Satis haec adversus intimationem laesae

<sup>1</sup> *Here Oehler keeps deo which other editors delete.*

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, viii. 347 :

hinc ad Tarpeiam sedem et Capitolia ducit

• aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis.

repaid their injuries rather than their homage. But those who feel nothing, it is as safe to hurt as it is vain to court. Certainly it cannot square with belief 17 that *they* should be supposed to have grown great as a reward of religion, who, as we have shown, did religion wrong and so grew strong, or growing strong did it wrong. Those also whose kingdoms were melted down to make the sum total of the Roman empire,—when they lost those kingdoms, they too were not without religions of their own.

XXVI. Look to it then, lest it prove that He dispenses the kingdoms, Whose is the world that is reigned over and the man who reigns; lest it be He that has ordained the progression of empires each at its time in the world's story, He who was ere time was, who made the world's story of all the times; lest it be He who extols the cities or brings them low, He under whom mankind was once without cities at all. Why blunder? Rome in the forest <sup>a</sup> 2 is older than some of her gods; she reigned before she built that great circuit of the Capitol. And Babylonians reigned before there were Roman pontiffs, Medes before there were Quindecimviri, Egyptians before there were Salii, Assyrians before there were Luperci, Amazons before there were Vestal Virgins. Finally, if Rome's religious observ- 3 ances give her the kingdoms, never in olden days would Judaea have reigned, Judaea who despised those deities of the nations; and yet time was when you Romans honoured Judaea's God with victims, her temple with gifts, her race with treaties, nor would you ever have lorded it over her, if she had not at the last sinned against Christ.

XXVII. So much is enough to rebut the charge of 1

## TERTULLIAN

divinitatis, quo non videamur laedere eam quam ostendimus non esse. Igitur provocati ad sacrificandum obstruimus gradum pro fide conscientiae nostrae, qua certi sumus ad quos ista perveniant officia sub imaginum prostitutione et humanorum nominum  
2 consecratione. Sed quidam dementiam existimant, quod, cum possimus et sacrificare in praesenti et inlaesi abire manente apud animum proposito,  
3 obstinationem saluti praeferamus. Datis scilicet consilium, quo vobis abutamur; sed agnoscimus, unde talia suggerantur, quis totum hoc agitet, et quomodo nunc astutia suadendi nunc duritia saeviendi  
4 ad constantiam nostram deiciendam operetur. Ille scilicet spiritus daemonicae et angelicae paraturae, qui noster ob divortium aemulus et ob dei gratiam invidus de mentibus vestris adversus nos proeliatur occulta inspiratione modulatis et subornatis ad omnem quam in primordio exorsi sumus et iudicandi perversi-  
5 tatem et saeviendi iniquitatem. Nam licet subiecta sit nobis tota vis daemonum et eiusmodi spirituum, ut nequam tamen et servi metu nonnunquam contumaciam miscent, et laedere gestiunt quos alias  
6 verentur. Odium enim etiam timor spirat. Praeterquam et desperata condicio eorum ex praedamnatione solatium reputat fruendae interim malignitatis de poenae mora. Et tamen adprehensi subiguntur et condicioni suae succidunt, et quos de longinquo  
7 oppugnant, de proximo obsecrant. Itaque cum vice rebellantium ergastulorum sive carcerum vel metallorum vel hoc genus poenalis servitutis erumpunt

---

<sup>a</sup> The demons are not endowed with deity.

<sup>b</sup> Compare Pliny's letter about the Christians to Trajan, *Epp.* x.96. 3 "neque enim dubitabam, quaecumque esset

injuring deity—since we cannot be thought to injure what we have proved non-existent.<sup>a</sup> So, when challenged to sacrifice, we stand immovable in loyalty to our conscience, certain in our knowledge whose are those services with their profane idols, and their deification of human names. But some people think 2 it madness, that, though we could for the moment sacrifice and go away unhurt, with a mental reservation, we prefer “obstinacy”<sup>b</sup> to safety. That is to 3 say, you advise us how to cheat you. But we recognize the source of these hints; who it is that sets it all in motion; how, sometimes by cunning ruse, sometimes by cruel rage, he works to overthrow our constancy. That spirit of demonic and angelic nature, 4 our rival because we are severed from him,<sup>c</sup> our enemy because God gives us grace, battles against us with your hearts for his base—your hearts tuned and suborned (as I said at the beginning) to perverse judgement and to savage rage. For though all the 5 power of demons and spirits of that sort be subject to us, still, like rascal slaves, they mingle insolence with their fear, and delight to injure those whom at other times they dread. For fear also is a source of hate. And, besides, in their desperate condition of being 6 condemned already, they count it consolation to gratify their spite while their punishment delays. And yet, when recognized, they are subdued and succumb to their condition; hostile to us from afar, face to face they entreat us. So when like rebels 7 breaking out of slave-pens, jails or mines, or that sort of penal servitude, they break out against us (in quod faterentur, pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri.” Also ch. 50 of this *Apology*.

<sup>a</sup> *Ob divortium* is taken by some as his revolt from God.

## TERTULLIAN

adversus nos, in quorum potestate sunt, certi et inpares se esse et hoc magis perditos, ingratis resistimus ut aequales et repugnamus perseverantes in eo quod oppugnant et illos nunquam magis detriumphamus quam cum pro fideli obstinatione damnatur.

- 1 XXVIII. Quoniam autem facile iniquum videretur liberos homines invitos urgeri ad sacrificandum (nam et alias divinae rei faciundae libens animus indicitur), certe ineptum existimaretur, si quis ab alio cogeretur ad honorem deorum, quos ultro sui causa placare deberet, ne prae manu esset iure libertatis dicere : Nolo mihi Iovem propitium ; tu quis es ? Me conveniat Ianus iratus ex qua velit fronte ; quid tibi mecum est ? Formati estis ab isdem utique spiritibus, uti nos pro salute imperatoris sacrificare cogatis, et inposita est tam vobis necessitas cogendi quam nobis obligatio periclitandi.
- 2 Ventum est igitur ad secundum titulum laesae augustioris maiestatis, siquidem maiore formidine et callidior timiditate Caesarem observatis quam ipsum de Olympo Iovem. Et merito, si sciatis. Quis enim
- 3 ex viventibus quilibet non mortuo potior ? Sed nec hoc vos ratione facitis potius quam respectu praesentanae potestatis : adeo et in isto inreligiosi erga

---

<sup>a</sup> *Ut aequales* is also translated "as if we were merely their equals," *i.e.* not their betters.

<sup>b</sup> The Latin structure of this half chapter, it is suggested, requires *quoniam* to cover all the clauses down to *mecum est*, after which comes the sequel or apodosis. But Latin structure, transferred to English words, does not always make for idiom or lucidity.

<sup>c</sup> He claims a free man's liberty to do without the goodwill of Janus and all other gods, but he ironically suggests that the demons urge compulsion because a higher welfare than his own is involved, *viz.* the Emperor's. The clause suffers, like some others, from having too much irony in it.



whose power they are)—though they well know they are no match for us and are only so much the more damned for it,—we have no choice but to hold our ground against them, conscious we are a match for them<sup>a</sup>; we put up a fight against them, and stand stubbornly on the point they assail. And our triumph over them is never greater than when for our obstinacy in our faith we are condemned.

XXVIII. It might easily seem unjust that free 1 men should be compelled to sacrifice against their will, for in other acts of divine service a willing mind is enjoined.<sup>b</sup> It would certainly seem silly for a man to be forced by another to honour the gods whom he ought to wish to please on his own account—forced to do it, that he might not use a freeman's right and rejoin offhand: "I don't want Jove to be propitious to me; who are you? Let Janus confront me in anger, with either face he pleases; what have I to do with you?" But you have been instructed of course by those very same evil spirits, to compel us to sacrifice for the health of the Emperor<sup>c</sup>; the necessity is laid upon you to compel us, just as much as the duty is laid upon us to face the danger.

So now we have come to the second charge, the 2 charge of treason against a majesty more august.<sup>d</sup> For it is with greater fear and shrewder timidity that you watch Caesar, than Olympian Jove himself. Quite right too, if you only knew it! For who among the living, whoever he be, is not better than a dead man? But it is not reason that makes you do this so much as 3 regard for power that can act on the instant. So that in this too you will be found irreligious to those gods

<sup>a</sup> See note on ch. 24. 1.

## TERTULLIAN

deos vestros deprehendimini, cum plus timoris humano dominio dicatis. Citius denique apud vos per omnes deos quam per unum genium Caesaris peieratur.

- 1 XXIX. Constet igitur prius, si isti, quibus sacrificatur, salutem imperatoribus vel cuilibet homini impertire possunt, et ita nos crimini maiestatis addicite, si angeli aut daemones substantia pessimi spiritus beneficium aliquod operantur, si perditii conservant, si damnati liberant, si denique, quod in conscientia  
2 vestra est, mortui vivos tuentur. Nam utique suas primo statuas et imagines et aedes tuerentur, quae, ut opinor, Caesarum milites excubiis salva praestant. Puto autem, eae ipsae materiae de metallis Caesarum veniunt, et tota templa de nutu Caesaris constant.  
3 Multi denique dei habuerunt Caesarem iratum. Facit ad causam, si et propitium, cum illis aliquid liberalitatis aut privilegii confert. Ita qui sunt in Caesaris potestate, cuius et toti sunt, quomodo habebunt salutem Caesaris in potestate, ut eam praestare posse videantur, quam facilius ipsi a Caesare con-  
4 sequantur? Ideo ergo committimus in maiestatem imperatoris, quia illos non subicimus rebus suis, quia non ludimus de officio salutis ipsorum qui eam  
5 non putamus in manibus esse plumbatis. Sed vos religiosi,<sup>1</sup> qui eam quaeritis ubi non est, petitis a quibus dari non potest, praeterito eo in cuius est

<sup>1</sup> *The reading irreligiosi, though well supported, misses the irony. It is kept by Oehler.*

<sup>a</sup> Genius is the equivalent of guardian spirit. Every man had his genius, the woman her Juno. Cf. ch. 32. 2.

<sup>b</sup> The hands of idols are still cast separately and soldered en.

of yours, when you show more fear for the rule of a man. In fact, among you perjury by all the gods together comes quicker than by the genius <sup>a</sup> of a single Caesar.

XXIX. First, then, let it be established whether 1 those beings, to whom sacrifice is offered, can give safety to the Emperor or to anybody at all; and then impeach us on the charge of treason, if it appears that angels or demons, in their natures the worst of spirits, do any good service; if the lost can save; if the damned can give freedom; if, in a word (and this is in your secret hearts), if the dead can protect the living. For they really would 2 begin by protecting their own statues and images and temples; which, I take it, are really kept safe by the soldiers of the Caesars on duty. I think, though, that the material of which they are made comes from Caesar's mines; and whole temples rest on Caesar's nod. Many gods ere now have felt Caesar's wrath. It 3 bears on the case, too, if they have found Caesar propitious—in conferring on them something by way of largesse or privilege. So, I ask, how will they, who are in Caesar's power, who belong to Caesar outright, have Caesar's safety in their power, that you should suppose them able to secure for him the safety which they themselves more easily have from Caesar? So, after 4 all, our crime against the majesty of the Emperors comes to this: that we do not subordinate them to their property; that we do not make a jest of our care for their safety, and do not think it really lies in hands soldered on with lead.<sup>b</sup> But it is you who are the 5 really religious people—you who seek Caesar's safety where it is not, who pray for it from those by whom it cannot be given, who pass by Him in whose power

## TERTULLIAN

potestate. Insuper eos debellatis qui eam sciunt petere, qui etiam possunt impetrare, dum sciunt petere.

- 1 XXX. Nos enim pro salute imperatorum deum invocamus aeternum, deum verum, deum vivum, quem et ipsi imperatores propitium sibi praeter ceteros malunt. Sciunt quis illis dederit imperium, sciunt, qua homines, quis et animam, sentiunt eum esse deum solum in cuius solius potestate sunt, a quo sint secundi, post quem primi, ante omnes et super omnes deos. Quidni? cum super omnes homines, qui utique vivunt et mortuis antistant. Recogitant
- 2 quousque vires imperii sui valent, et ita deum intellegunt; adversus quem valere non possunt, per eum valere se cognoscunt. Caelum denique debellet imperator, caelum captivum triumpho suo invehat, caelo mittat excubias, caelo vectigalia imponat. Non
- 3 potest. Ideo magnus est quia caelo minor est. Illius enim est ipse cuius et caelum est et omnis creatura. Inde est imperator unde et homo antequam imperator, inde potestas illi unde et spiritus.
- 4 Illuc suspicientes Christiani manibus expansis, quia innocuis, capite nudo, quia non erubescimus, denique sine monitore, quia de pectore oramus, precantes sumus semper pro omnibus imperatoribus. Vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum,

<sup>a</sup> Cf. prayer for Emperors in Clement of Rome, 60.

<sup>b</sup> Is this a distant memory of Horace? *Odes*, iii. 6. 5 "dis te minorem quod geris imperas."

<sup>c</sup> The Roman prayed with head covered; cf. Virgil, *Aen.* iii. 405; Lucr. v. 1196.

<sup>d</sup> In Roman ritual the formula was more important than the intention; the prayer (like an Indian *mantram*) depended

it is. Yes, and more than that, you wage war on those who know how to pray for it, and who can obtain it too, since they know how to pray for it.

XXX. For we, on behalf of the safety of the 1  
Emperors,<sup>a</sup> invoke the eternal God, the true God, the living God, whom the Emperors themselves prefer to have propitious to them beyond all other gods. They know who has given them the empire ; they know, as men, who has given them life ; they feel that He is God alone, in whose power and no other's they are, second to whom they stand, after whom they come first, before all gods and above all gods. Why not ? seeing that they are above all men, and men at any rate live and so are better than dead things. They 2  
reflect how far the strength of their empire avails, and thus they understand God ; against Him they cannot avail, so they know it is through Him that they do avail. Let the Emperor, as a last test, make war on heaven, carry heaven captive in his triumph, set a guard on heaven, lay taxes on heaven. He cannot. So he is great, because he is less than heaven.<sup>b</sup> He 3  
himself belongs to Him, whose is heaven and all creation. Thence comes the Emperor, whence came the man before he was Emperor ; thence his power, whence his spirit. Looking up to heaven the 4  
Christians—with hands outspread, because innocent, with head bare because we do not blush,<sup>c</sup> yes ! and without one to give the form of words,<sup>d</sup> for we pray from the heart,—we are ever making intercession for all the Emperors. We pray for them long life, a secure rule, a safe home, brave armies, a faithful senate, an honest people, a quiet world—and every-on being verbally precise. Tertullian here states another conception of prayer,

## TERTULLIAN

orbem quietum, quaecunque hominis et Caesaris vota  
5 sunt, haec ab alio orare non possum quam a quo me  
scio consecuturum, quoniam et ipse est qui solus  
praestat et ego sum cui impetrare debetur, famulus  
eius, qui eum solus observo, qui propter disciplinam  
eius occidor, qui ei offero opimam et maiorem hostiam  
quam ipse mandavit, orationem de carne pudica, de  
6 anima innocenti, de spiritu sancto profectam, non  
grana thuris unius assis, Arabicae arboris lacrimas,  
nec duas meri guttas, nec sanguinem reprobi bovis  
mori optantis, et post omnia inquinamenta etiam  
conscientiam spurcam : ut mirer, cum hostiae pro-  
bantur penes vos a vitiosissimis sacerdotibus, cur<sup>1</sup>  
7 praecordia potius victimarum quam ipsorum sacri-  
ficantium examinentur. Sic itaque nos ad deum  
expansos ungulae fodiant, cruces suspendant, ignes  
lambant, gladii guttura detruncant, bestiae insiliant :  
paratus est ad omne supplicium ipse habitus orantis  
Christiani. Hoc agite, boni praesides, extorquete  
animam deo supplicantem pro imperatore. Hoc erit  
crimen, ubi veritas dei et devotio est.

1 XXXI. Adolati nunc sumus imperatori et mentiti  
vota quae diximus, ad evadendam scilicet vim. Plane  
proficit ista fallacia. Admittitis nos enim probare  
quodcunque defendimus. Qui ergo putaveris nihil  
nos de salute Caesarum curare, inspicite dei voces,  
litteras nostras, quas neque ipsi supprimimus et  
2 plerique casus ad extraneos transferunt. Scitote ex  
illis praeceptum esse nobis ad redundantiam benigni-

<sup>1</sup> *This is a correction, the simplest correction: Oehler prefers to read cum cuivis.*

<sup>a</sup> The two sentences are obscure; this is Rauschen's explanation.

thing for which a man and a Caesar can pray. All this 5  
 I cannot ask of any other but only of Him, from whom  
 I know I shall receive it, since He it is who alone gives  
 and I am one to whom the answer to prayer is due,  
 His servant, who alone worships Him, who for His  
 teaching am slain, who offer to Him that rich and  
 better sacrifice which He himself commanded—I  
 mean prayer, proceeding from flesh pure, soul inno-  
 cent, spirit holy. Not grains of incense worth one 6  
 halfpenny, tears of an Arabian tree, not two drops of  
 wine, not blood of a worthless ox longing to die, and  
 on top of all sorts of pollution a conscience unclean ;—  
 so that I wonder why, when among you victims are  
 being examined by the most vicious of priests, the  
 breasts of the victims rather than of the sacrificers  
 should be inspected. While thus, then, we spread our- 7  
 selves before God, let the hooks pierce us, the crosses  
 suspend us, the fires play upon us, the swords gash our  
 throats, the beasts leap on us. The very posture of  
 the Christian at prayer is readiness for any torture.  
 Go to it, my good magistrates, rack out the soul that  
 prays to God for the Emperor. Here lies the crime—  
 where God's truth is, where devotion to God is.

XXXI. Ah ! but we have been flattering the 1  
 Emperor ; we lied about those prayers we alleged—  
 to avoid being roughly dealt with, of course. Your  
 cleverness, in so saying, helps us however. For you  
 give us a chance to prove whatever point we bring  
 up in our defence.<sup>a</sup> You, sir, then, who fancy we  
 care nothing for Caesar's safety, look into the words  
 of God, into our books, which we do not hide, and  
 which many a chance throws into the hands of out-  
 siders. Learn from them, that the precept is given 2  
 us (to the point of overflow of kindness) to pray to

## TERTULLIAN

tatis etiam pro inimicis deum orare et persecutoribus nostris bona precari. Qui magis inimici et persecutores Christianorum quam de quorum maiestate  
3 convenimur in crimen? Sed etiam nominatim atque manifeste, Orate, inquit, pro regibus et pro principibus et potestatibus, ut omnia tranquilla sint vobis. Cum enim concutitur imperium concussis etiam ceteris membris eius utique et nos, licet extranei a turbis aestimemur,<sup>1</sup> in aliquo loco casus invenimur.

1 XXXII. Est et alia maior necessitas nobis orandi pro imperatoribus, etiam pro omni statu imperii rebusque Romanis, qui vim maximam universo orbi imminentem ipsamque clausulam saeculi acerbitates horrendas comminantem Romani imperii commeatu scimus retardari. Itaque nolumus experiri, et dum precamur differri, Romanae diuturnitati favemus.

2 Sed et iuramus, sicut non per genios Caesarum, ita per salutem eorum, quae est augustior omnibus geniis. Nescitis genios daemonas dici et inde diminutiva voce daemonia? Nos iudicium dei suspicimus in  
3 imperatoribus, qui gentibus illos praefecit. Id in eis scimus esse quod deus voluit, ideoque et salvum volumus esse quod deus voluit et pro magno id

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler with some MS. warrant retains aestimemur: others with other MS. warrant omit it. It would be easier without it, but that does not make it more probable in Tertullian's writing.*

---

<sup>a</sup> 1 Timothy ii. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Or "though we are counted foreigners by the crowds."

<sup>c</sup> Or the Roman world.

<sup>d</sup> *Cf.* 2 Thess. ii. 6-8. Tertullian elsewhere (*Ad Scapulam*, 2) indicates the belief that the Roman Empire is to last as long as the world. It is to be noted that, apart from the author of the canonical *Apocalypse*, the early Christian



God even for our enemies, to beseech His blessings for our persecutors. Who are more the enemies and the persecutors of Christians, than those against whose majesty we are accused of treason? But here <sup>3</sup> it is explicitly named and in plain terms. "Pray," he says "for kings, and for princes and powers, that all things may be tranquil for you."<sup>a</sup> For when the empire is shaken, when the rest of its members are shaken, we, too, of course, though we are supposed not to have anything to do with the disorder,<sup>b</sup> are found in some corner of the disaster.

XXXII. There is another need, a greater one, for <sup>1</sup> our praying for the Emperors, and for the whole estate of the empire and the interests of Rome.<sup>c</sup> We know that the great force which threatens the whole world, the end of the age itself with its menace of hideous suffering, is delayed by the respite which the Roman empire means for us.<sup>d</sup> We do not wish to experience all that; and when we pray for its postponement are helping forward the continuance of Rome.

We make our oaths, too, not by "the genius of <sup>2</sup> the Caesar," but by his health, which is more august than any genius. Do you not know that *genius* is a name for *demon*, or in the diminutive *daemonium*? We respect the judgement of God in the Emperors, who has set them over the nations. We know that to <sup>3</sup> be in them which God wished to be there, and so we wish that safe, which God wished; and we count that

writers are *not* hostile to the Roman Empire; they wish not to be persecuted naturally, but otherwise they recognize the value of the government and do not wish it to be changed. The Pauline view prevails as against the purely Jewish.

## TERTULLIAN

iuramento habemus. Ceterum daemones, id est genios, adiurare consuevimus, ut illos de hominibus exigamus, non deierare, ut eis honorem divinitatis conferamus.

- 1 XXXIII. Sed quid ego amplius de religione atque pietate Christiana in imperatore? quem necesse est suspiciamus ut eum quem dominus noster elegit, ut merito dixerim: Noster est magis Caesar, a nostro
- 2 deo constitutus. Itaque ut meo plus ego illi operor in salutem, siquidem non solum ab eo postulo eam qui potest praestare, aut quod talis postulo qui merear impetrare, sed etiam quod temperans maiestatem Caesaris infra deum magis illum commendo deo, cui soli subicio. Subicio autem cui non adaequo.
- 3 Non enim deum imperatorem dicam, vel quia mentiri nescio, vel quia illum deridere non audeo, vel quia nec ipse se deum volet dici. Si homo sit, interest homini deo cedere. Satis habeat appellari imperator. Grande et hoc nomen est, quod a deo traditur. Negat illum imperatorem qui deum dicit; nisi homo
- 4 sit non est imperator. Hominem se esse etiam triumphans in illo sublimissimo curru admonetur. Suggestitur enim ei a tergo: Respice post te! Hominem te memento! Et utique hoc magis gaudet tanta se gloria coruscare, ut illi admonitio condicionis suae sit necessaria. Minor erat, si tunc deus diceretur quia non vere diceretur. Maior est qui revocatur, ne se deum existimet.

- 1 XXXIV. Augustus, imperii formator, ne dominum

---

<sup>a</sup> Juvenal, iii. 41; if (which is uncertain) Tertullian has Juvenal in mind.

a great oath. But demons, or geniuses, we are accustomed to exorcize, in order to drive them out of men—not to swear by them and so give them the honour of divinity.

XXXIII. But why need I say more of the religious 1 awe, the piety, of Christians, where the Emperor is concerned? We must needs respect him as the chosen of our Lord. So I have a right to say, Caesar is 2 more ours than yours, appointed as he is by our God. He is mine; and so I do more for his safety,—not only because I seek it from Him only who can give it; or because I who ask am one who deserve to receive; but also because I set the majesty of Caesar below God and the more commend him to God to Whom alone I subordinate him. This I do, in that I do not make him equal to God. For I will not call 3 the Emperor God for various reasons, as that I “know not to lie,”<sup>a</sup> that I dare not mock him, that he himself will not wish to be called God. If he is a man, it is a man’s interest to yield place to God. Let him be satisfied to be called Emperor. And a great name it is, too, that God gives him! The man denies he is Emperor, who says he is God. Unless he is a man, he is not Emperor. Even in the triumph, as 4 he rides in that most exalted chariot, he is reminded that he is a man. It is whispered to him from behind: “Look behind thee; remember thou art a man.” That he is in such a blaze of glory that the reminder of his mortal state is necessary for him—makes it the more delightful to him. He would be less, if he were at that moment called a god, because it would not be true. He is greater, who is called to look back, lest he think himself a god.

XXXIV. Augustus, who framed the empire, was 1

## TERTULLIAN

- quidem dici se volebat ; et hoc enim dei est cognomen. Dicam plane imperatorem dominum, sed more communi, sed quando non cogor, ut dominum dei vice dicam. Ceterum liber sum illi. Dominus enim meus unus est, deus omnipotens aeternus, idem qui et  
 2 ipsius. Qui pater patriae est, quomodo dominus est ? Sed et gratius est nomen pietatis quam potestatis. Etiam familiae magis patres quam domini vocantur. Tanto abest ut imperator deus debeat dici, quod non potest credi non modo turpissima sed et perniciosa  
 3 adolatione. Tamquam si habens imperatorem alterum appelles, nonne maximam et inexorabilem offensam contrahes eius quem habuisti, etiam ipsi timendam quem appellasti ? Esto religiosus in deum, qui vis illum propitium imperatori. Desine alium deum credere atque ita et hunc deum dicere cui deo opus  
 4 est. Si non de mendacio erubescit adulatio eiusmodi hominem deum appellans, timeat saltem de infausto. Maledictum est ante apotheosin deum Caesarem nuncupari.
- 1 XXXV. Propterea igitur publici hostes Christiani, quia imperatoribus neque vanos neque mentientes neque temerarios honores dicant, quia verae religionis homines etiam solemnia eorum conscientia

---

<sup>a</sup> See Suetonius, *Augustus*, 53, an interesting chapter. The word *dominus* was associated with the ownership of slaves and with political tyranny. Dio Cassius, lvi. 8. 1, says that Tiberius said he was not δεσπότης = *dominus* to free men, nor *imperator* except to his soldiers.

<sup>b</sup> So Brutus in Cic. *Epp. ad Brut.* i. 17. 6 "sed dominum ne parentem quidem maiores nostri voluerunt esse."

<sup>c</sup> The text is shaky here ; but the version, if not exact translation, gives the gist.

<sup>d</sup> Cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 74. 4. When a consul designate proposed the building of a temple to the deified Nero,  
 158

unwilling to be called so much as Lord<sup>a</sup>; for that also is a name of God. I will frankly call the Emperor Lord, but only in the ordinary way. but only when force is not brought to bear on me to call him Lord in the sense of God. But I am a free man as far as the Emperor is concerned; for my Lord is One, God omnipotent, eternal, who is also the Emperor's Lord. He who is "Father of his Country," how is 2 he its *lord*? But there is more pleasure in the name of affection than in the name of power. Even in the family we say *paterfamilias* rather than lord.<sup>b</sup> So far is it from being right for the Emperor to be called god,—a name incredible save in flattery not merely abject but injurious.<sup>c</sup> It would be much the 3 same as if, when one man was Emperor, you called another man by that name—would you not incur the deepest displeasure, and quite inexorable, in the real Emperor, not without danger at the same time for the man to whom you have given the name? Be you religious toward God, you who wish Him propitious to the Emperor. Cease to believe there is another God; and cease in the same way to call him God, who needs God. If flattery does not 4 blush at the lie, when it calls such a man God, let it fear the uncanny side of it; it is a curse before his apotheosis to call Caesar god.<sup>d</sup>

XXXV. So that is why Christians are public 1 enemies,—because they will not give the Emperors vain, false and rash honours; because, being men of a true religion, they celebrate the Emperors' festivals

Nero vetoed it, afraid (Tacitus says) that someone would twist the proposal into an omen portending his death; for divine honours were not given to an Emperor till his career among men was ended.

more in heart than in frolic. Splendid service, I 2  
 assure you! to bring braziers and couches out into the  
 open air, street by street to dine together,<sup>a</sup> to make the  
 city look like nothing but a tavern, to make mud with  
 wine, to rush about in droves for outrage, impudence  
 and the incitements to lust. Is it thus that a people's  
 joy is expressed in public shame? Does such con-  
 duct befit the festal days of princes, when it ill befits 3  
 other days? Men who maintain order out of regard  
 for Caesar, are they to abandon it for Caesar's sake?  
 Shall their good feeling for him be their licence to  
 follow bad ways? shall religion be reckoned as an  
 occasion for indulgence? Oh it is we deserve to be 4  
 condemned! For why do we perform our vows  
 and celebrate our joys for the Caesars, chaste, sober  
 and decent? Why on the glad day do we not hang  
 our doors with laurels and intrude upon the daylight  
 with lamps?<sup>b</sup> It is the honest man's duty, when  
 a great public occasion calls, to rig your house up  
 like some new brothel!

I should like, though, in dealing with this religion of 5  
 a second majesty,<sup>c</sup> in which we Christians are charged  
 with a second sacrilege because we do not celebrate  
 the holidays of the Caesars with you in a way which  
 neither modesty, decency, nor chastity permits  
 —a way recommended by the chance of pleasure  
 rather than by proper thought—I should like, I say,  
 to exhibit *your* loyalty and truth, in case here, too,  
 those who will not allow us to be counted Romans  
 but enemies of the Roman princes, may be proved  
 worse even than Christians. I arraign the Quirites 6  
 themselves. and the native plebs of the seven hills—  
 does that Roman tongue spare any one of its Caesars?

<sup>a</sup> *i.e.*, next after the gods.

## TERTULLIAN

Romana? Testis est Tiberis, et scholae bestiarum.

- 7 Iam si pectoribus ad translucendum quandam specularem materiam natura obduxisset, cuius non praecordia insculpta apparent novi ac novi Caesaris scenam congiario dividundo praesidentis? Etiam illa hora qua adclamant:

de nostris annis augeat tibi Iupiter annos!

Haec Christianus tam enuntiare non novit quam de novo Caesare optare.

- 8 Sed vulgus, inquis. Ut vulgus, tamen Romani, nec ulli magis depostulatores Christianorum quam vulgus. Plane ceteri ordines pro auctoritate religiosi ex fide. Nihil hosticum de ipso senatu, de equite,  
9 de castris, de palatiis ipsis spirat. Unde Cassii et Nigri et Albini? unde qui inter duas laurus obsident Caesarem? unde qui faucibus eius exprimendis palaestricam exercent? unde qui armati palatium inrumpunt, omnibus tot Sigeriis atque Partheniis audaciores? De Romanis, nisi fallor, id est de non

---

<sup>a</sup> The Tiber is in the mss.; but the Circus is thought more probable; cf. Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, 16; in *Ad Nationes*, i. 17, he refers to pasquinades hung on statues: "Ipsius vernaculae gentis inreverentiam recognoscam et festivos libellos quos statuæ sciunt et illa obliqua nonnunquam dicta a concilio atque maledicta quæ circi sonant." See W. W. Story, *Roba di Roma*, chap. xi; Roman wit, he says, is essentially satirical, and its true type is *Pasquino*—from the Middle Ages to Pio Nono, with abundant examples in Latin and Italian. "Quod non fecerunt barbari fecerunt Barberini" comes from the famous statue associated with the name Pasquino.

<sup>b</sup> The authorship of this hexameter seems unknown; something slightly like it in Ovid, *Fasti*, i. 613. The reader will readily correct the metre, but the line was used by the Arval Brothers as it stands.

<sup>c</sup> Because he cannot pray to Jupiter.

The Tiber <sup>a</sup> shall be witness, and the training-schools of the beasts. If Nature had covered our breasts with some transparent material that would let the light through, whose heart would not appear engraved with the picture of one new Caesar after another, presiding over the distribution of largesse? Yes, even in the very hour when they are shouting :

Jupiter take our years to add to thine.<sup>b</sup>

A Christian can no more utter these words than wish for a new Caesar.<sup>c</sup>

But that is the common herd, you say. Common 8 herd, if you will, but Romans ; and there are none more apt to shout for the death of the Christians than the common herd. But, of course, the other orders of society stand religiously for authority, as their loyalty requires ! There is never a whiff of hostility from Senate, knight, camp, or the palace itself ! And 9 whence a Cassius, a Niger, an Albinus ? Whence those who between two laurels lie in wait for Caesar ? Whence those who practise wrestling with a view to strangling him ? Whence those who, with weapon in hand, break into his palace, more daring than any Sigerius or Parthenius ? <sup>d</sup> From among Romans,

<sup>a</sup> The laurels are an unsolved riddle (*cf.* Martial, iv. 78). Commodus was strangled in A.D. 192 by a wrestler with whom he used to train. *Script. Hist. August., Commodus*, 17. Avidius Cassius was a usurper in the time of Marcus Aurelius (his life is in the *Scriptores Historiæ Augustæ*) ; Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus attempted to seize the imperial throne on the death of Commodus, the one supported by the army in Syria, the other by that of Britain. Those who broke into the palace killed the Emperor Pertinax (Dio Cass. lxxiv. 9). So much was quite recent history. Sigerius and Parthenius were among the murderers of Domitian. See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chapter v.



## TERTULLIAN

- 10 Christianis. Atque adeo omnes illi sub ipsa usque impietatis eruptione et sacra faciebant pro salute imperatoris et genium eius deierabant, alii foris alii intus, et utique publicorum hostium nomen Christianis dabant.
- 11 Sed et qui nunc scelestarum partium socii aut plausores cotidie revelantur, post vindemiam parri-  
cidarum racematio superstes, quam recentissimis et ramosissimis laureis postes praestruiebant, quam elatissimis et clarissimis lucernis vestibula nebula-  
bant, quam cultissimis et superbissimis toris forum sibi dividebant, non ut gaudia publica celebrarent, sed ut vota propria iam ediscerent in aliena sollemni-  
tate et exemplum atque imaginem spei suae inaugu-  
rarent nomen principis in corde mutant.
- 12 Eadem officia dependunt et qui astrologos et aru-  
spices et augures et magos de Caesarum capite con-  
sultant, quas artes ut ab angelis desertoribus proditas  
et a deo interdictas ne suis quidem causis adhibent  
Christiani. Cui autem opus est perscrutari super  
Caesaris salute, nisi a quo aliquid adversus illam  
cogitatur vel optatur, aut post illam speratur et  
sustinetur? Non enim ea mente de caris consulitur

---

<sup>a</sup> Kellner takes the adverbs to mean "officially" and "privately"; the Ante-Nicene Library translation has it that the plotters were "one thing in profession and another in the heart," which is attractive.

<sup>b</sup> The commentators cite Spartianus, *Life of Severus*, 15 (in *Script. Hist. August.*): "inter haec Pescennianas reliquias Plautiano auctore persequabatur ita ut nonnullos etiam ex amicis suis quasi vitae suae insidiatores appeteret." The details seem unknown. But Spartianus's next sentence says

unless I am mistaken, from among non-Christians. Yes, yes, every one of them, right up to the moment 10 of the outburst of impiety, was offering sacrifice for the health of the Emperor, was swearing by his genius, some outdoors, some indoors,<sup>a</sup> and you may be sure they were giving the Christians the name of public enemies.

But to come to our own times, and the daily 11 revelations as to the accomplices in guilty plots and those who applaud them (the gleanings that remain after a whole vintage of assassins !)—how very fresh, how very bushy, were the laurels with which they decked their doors ! how very high, how very bright, the lamps with which they smoked the halls ! how very splendid and how very proud the couches with which they divided the forum among them ! No, not to celebrate the people's joys, but to study some private prayers of their own ; in the midst of the festival of others to inaugurate the pattern and picture of their own hopes, changing the *name* of the Emperor in their hearts.<sup>b</sup>

The same duty and service are rendered by those 12 who consult the astrologers, the soothsayers, the augurs and the magicians as to the life of the Caesars—arts made known by the angels that forsook God, arts which God has forbidden, which Christians never use even in their own private affairs. What man has any need to pry into the question of Caesar's safety, unless it be one whose thoughts or wishes are hostile to Caesar's safety, or whose hopes or expectations look to something later ? For very different is the spirit in which such inquiries are made where men's the Emperor killed many on the charge "quasi Chaldaeos aut vates de sua salute consulissent."

## TERTULLIAN

qua de dominis. Aliter curiosa est sollicitudo sanguinis, aliter servitutis.

- 1 XXXVI. Si haec ita sunt, ut hostes deprehendantur qui Romani vocabantur, cur nos, qui hostes existimamur, Romani negamur? Non possumus et Romani non esse et hostes esse, cum hostes reperiantur qui
- 2 Romani habebantur. Adeo pietas et religio et fides imperatoribus debita non in huiusmodi officiis consistit quibus et hostilitas magis ad velamentum sui potest fungi, sed in his moribus quibus divinitas imperat tam vere quam circa omnes necesse habent exhiberi.
- 3 Neque enim haec opera bonae mentis solis imperatoribus debentur a nobis. Nullum bonum sub exceptione personarum administramus, quia nobis praestamus, qui non ab homine aut laudis aut praemii expensum captamus, sed a deo exactore et remuneratore indifferentis benignitatis. Idem sumus imperatoribus qui et vicinis nostris. Male enim velle, male facere, male dicere, male cogitare de quoquam ex aequo vetamur. Quodcunque non licet in imperatorem, id nec in quemquam: quod in neminem, eo forsitan magis nec in ipsum qui per deum tantus est.
- 1 XXXVII. Si inimicos, ut supra diximus, iubemur diligere, quem habemus odisse? Item si laesi vicem referre prohibemur, ne de facto pares simus, quem
- 2 possumus laedere? Nam de isto ipsi recognoscite. Quotiens enim in Christianos desaevitis partim

---

<sup>a</sup> The translation is a very free attempt to render what seems to lie behind the Latin text. Various expedients are tried—the shifting of *non* (with some quite silly results), its omission, its transformation into *nos*—but none seems satisfactory. Oehler, Rauschen, and Waltzing keep the ms. reading as above.

dear ones are involved and where their masters. A kinsman's anxiety and a slave's show different types of curiosity.

XXXVI. If it comes to this that men who were 1 called Romans are found to be enemies, why are we, who are thought to be enemies, denied the name of Romans? It is impossible to say that we are not Romans because we are enemies, when enemies are discovered who were counted Romans.<sup>a</sup> The piety, 2 the religious attitude, the loyalty, owed to Emperors does not consist of such observances as hostility may perform to cloak its intentions; but in that type of character which God as truly requires of us to show our right feeling towards the Emperor as He requires it in the case of all men. For it is not 3 to Emperors alone that we owe these works of a good heart. No exception of persons is allowed in any good action we discharge; for we do it for ourselves—not that we plan to get any return in praise or recompense from man, but from God, who requires and rewards a benevolence that makes no distinction between persons. We are the same to the Emperors 4 as we are to our neighbours. For to wish evil, to do evil, to speak evil, to think evil of any—are all equally forbidden to us. What we may not do to the Emperor, we may not do to any man. What we may do to no man, so much the more, I take it, must we not do to him, who through God is so great.

XXXVII. If, as we said above, we are bidden love 1 our enemies, whom have we to hate? Again, if, when a man injures us, we are forbidden to retaliate, that the action may not make us alike, whom then can we injure? Look at this, yourselves, and think 2 it over! How often do you wreak your fury on the

## TERTULLIAN

animis propriis, partim legibus obsequentes ? Quotiens etiam praeteritis vobis suo iure nos inimicum vulgus invadit lapidibus et incendiis ? Ipsis Bacchanalium furiis nec mortuis parcunt Christianis, quin illos de requie sepulturae, de asylo quodam mortis, iam alios, iam nec totos avellant, dissecent, distrahant.

3 Quid tamen de tam conspiratis umquam denotatis, de tam animatis ad mortem usque pro iniuria repensatum, quando vel una nox pauculis faculis largiter ultionis posset operari, si malum malo dispungi penes nos liceret ? Sed absit ut aut igni humano vindicetur divina secta aut doleat pati in quo probatur.

4 Si enim et hostes exertos, non tantum vindices occultos agere vellemus, deesset nobis vis numerorum et copiarum ? Plures nimirum Mauri et Marcomanni ipsique Parthi, vel quantaecunque unius tamen loci et suorum finium gentes quam totius orbis. Hesterni sumus, et vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum ; sola vobis  
5 reliquimus templa.<sup>1</sup> Cui bello non idonei, non prompti fuissetus, etiam inpares copiis, qui tam libenter trucidamur, si non apud istam disciplinam magis occidi liceret quam occidere ?

6 Potuimus et inermes nec rebelles, sed tantummodo

---

<sup>1</sup> *The codex Fuldensis inserts* : Possumus dinumerare exercitus vestros ; unius provinciae plures erunt.

<sup>a</sup> The *Apology* is addressed to the magistrates, it will be recalled ; and the mob would give them the go-by.

<sup>b</sup> Or possibly in the urban sense, " blocks " of buildings, lodging houses.

<sup>c</sup> Roughly, town councils.

Christians, in part obeying your own instincts, in part the laws? How often, too, without regard to you,<sup>a</sup> does the unfriendly mob on its own account assail us with stones and fire? Mad as Bacchanals, they spare not even the Christian dead; no! from the repose of the grave, from what I may call death's asylum, changed as the bodies may be, or mere fragments—they will have them out, rip and rend them. Yet I ask, though Christians are so sworn to 3 one purpose, so ready for death itself, what retaliation for injury can you charge against us, though a single night and a few little torches could work a lavish revenge, if among us wrong might be wiped out with wrong? But away with the thought that God's school should either avenge itself with man's fire, or resent the suffering that is its probation!

For if we wished to play the part of open enemies, 4 and not merely hidden avengers, should we lack the power that numbers and battalions give? Oh, of course, the Moors, the Marcomanni, yes, and the Parthians—or any other races, as great as you please, but of one region with their own frontiers—are more numerous than the race that covers the world! We are but of yesterday, and we have filled everything you have—cities, islands,<sup>b</sup> forts, towns, exchanges, yes! and camps, tribes, decuries,<sup>c</sup> palace, senate, forum. All we have left to you is the temples! [We can count your troops; the Christians of one province will be more in number.] For what war 5 should we not have been fit and ready even if unequal in forces—we who are so glad to be butchered—were it not, of course, that in our doctrine we are given ampler liberty to be killed than to kill?

Why! without taking up arms, without rebellion, 6

## TERTULLIAN

- discordes solius divortii invidia adversus vos dimicasse. Si enim tanta vis hominum in aliquem orbis remoti sinum abruptissemus a vobis, suffudisset utique dominationem vestram tot qualiumcumque civium amissio, immo etiam et ipsa destitutione punisset.
- 7 Procul dubio expavissetis ad solitudinem vestram, ad silentium rerum et stuporem quendam quasi mortui orbis. Quaesissetis quibus imperaretis. Plures hostes
- 8 quam cives vobis remansissent. Nunc enim pauciores hostes habetis prae multitudine Christianorum, paene omnium civitatum paene omnes cives Christianos habendo. Sed hostes maluistis vocare generis humani potius quam erroris humani.
- 9 Quis autem vos ab illis occultis et usquequaque vastantibus mentes et valitudines vestras hostibus raperet, a daemoniorum incursibus dico, quae de vobis sine praemio, sine mercede depellimus? Suffecisset hoc solum nostrae ultioni, quod vacua
- 10 exinde possessio inmundis spiritibus pateret. Porro nec tanti praesidii compensationem cogitantes non modo non molestum vobis genus, verum etiam necessarium hostes iudicare maluistis, quia sumus plane, non generis humani tamen, sed potius erroris.
- 1 XXXVIII. Proinde nec paulo lenius inter licitas factiones sectam istam deputari oportebat, a qua nihil tale committitur quale de illicitis factionibus

---

<sup>a</sup> *Suffundere*, as "put to the blush," without a *rubore* or *pudore*, in ch. 4. Oehler, on Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, 10, collects a number of other instances.

<sup>b</sup> Kellner notes that in the western world decline of population was already beginning to be remarked.

<sup>c</sup> If this seems exaggeration, a touch of rhetoric (which is very possible), it must be remembered (as the word pagan should remind us) that Christianity flourished best where cities were most numerous.

simply by standing aside, by mere ill-natured separation, we could have fought you! For if so vast a mass of people as we had broken away from you and removed to some recess of the world apart, the mere loss of so many citizens of whatever sort would have brought a blush<sup>a</sup> to your rule—yes, that it would, and punished you, too, by sheer desertion! Beyond 7 doubt, you would have shuddered at your solitude, at the silence in the world, the stupor as it were of a dead globe. You would have had to look about for people to rule.<sup>b</sup> You would have had more enemies left than citizens. For, as things are, you have fewer 8 enemies because of the multitude of the Christians, when nearly all the citizens you have in nearly all the cities are Christian.<sup>c</sup> But you have preferred to call us enemies of the human race rather than of human error.

But who would rescue you from those secret enemies 9 that everywhere lay waste your minds and your bodily health? I mean, from the assaults of demons, whom we drive out of you, without reward, without pay. Why, this alone would have sufficed to avenge us—to leave you open and exposed to unclean spirits with immediate possession! But no such thing! 10 Far from thinking of any reward for us for protection so great, you have preferred to account a race of men, not merely harmless to you, but necessary, to be enemies. And so we are—enemies, that is, not of the human race, but of human error.

XXXVIII. I proceed. Was not a rather gentler 1 treatment in order? Should not this school have been classed among tolerated associations, when it commits no such actions as are commonly feared from un-



## TERTULLIAN

- 2 timeri solet ? Nisi fallor enim, prohibendarum factionum causa de providentia constant modestiae publicae ne civitas in partes scinderetur, quae res facile comitia, concilia, curias, contiones, spectacula etiam aemulis studiorum compulsionibus inquietaret, cum iam et in quaestu habere coepissent venalem et
- 3 mercenariam homines violentiae suae operam. At enim nobis ab omni gloriae et dignitatis ardore frigentibus nulla est necessitas coetus, nec ulla magis res aliena quam publica. Unam omnium rempublicam agnoscimus mundum.
- 4 Aeque spectaculis vestris in tantum renuntiamus in quantum originibus eorum, quas scimus de superstitione conceptas, cum et ipsis rebus, de quibus transiguntur, praetersumus. Nihil est nobis dictu, visu, auditu cum insania circi, cum impudicitia theatri, cum atrocitate arenae, cum xysti vanitate. Quo vos
- 5 offendimus, si alias praesumimus voluptates ? Si oblectari novisse nolumus, nostra iniuria est, si forte, non vestra. Sed reprobamus quae placent vobis. Nec vos nostra delectant. Sed licuit Epicureis aliquam decernere voluptatis veritatem, id est animi aequitatem, †et ampla negotia Christianae.†<sup>1</sup>
- 1 XXXIX. Edam iam nunc ego ipse negotia Christianae factionis, ut qui mala refutaverim, bona ostendam.

<sup>1</sup> *The text is uncertain; different nouns are added to explain Christianae. Perhaps words are thrown back from ch. 39 or a title it may once have had. What seems required by the sense is some suggestion that, if the Epicureans were allowed their theory of pleasure, the Christian has the same right to his idea of it. The codex Fuldensis has the Sed licuit sentence before the Quo vos offendimus. Rauschen and Waltzing follow it, and cut away the four words obelized.*

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Pliny to Trajan, *Epp.* 96. 7.

<sup>b</sup> One of many Stoic turns in Tertullian.

lawful associations? <sup>a</sup> For, unless I am mistaken, <sup>2</sup>  
the reason for prohibiting associations clearly lay in  
forethought for public order—to save the State from  
being torn into parties, a thing very likely to disturb  
election assemblies, public gatherings, local senates,  
meetings, even the public games, with the clashing  
and rivalry of partisans, especially since men had  
begun to reckon on their violence as a source of  
revenue, offering it for sale at a price. We, how- <sup>3</sup>  
ever, whom all the flames of glory and dignity leave  
cold, have no need to combine; nothing is more  
foreign to us than the State. One state we know, of  
which all are citizens—the universe.<sup>b</sup>

Your public games, too, we renounce, as heartily <sup>4</sup>  
as we do their origins; we know these origins lie  
in superstition; we leave on one side the matters  
with which they are concerned. We have nothing  
to do, in speech, sight or hearing, with the madness  
of the circus, the shamelessness of the theatre, the  
savagery of the arena, the vanity of the gym-  
nasium. Why should we offend you, if we assume <sup>5</sup>  
the existence of other pleasures? If we do not  
wish to know delight, it is our loss; in any case,  
not yours. But we reject what pleases you; what  
pleases us gives you no delight. But the Epicureans  
were allowed to maintain their theory of what true  
pleasure is; they found it in calm of mind;† and  
for Christian . . . . . there is ample occupation.†

XXXIX. I will now show you the proceedings with <sup>1</sup>  
which the Christian association occupies itself<sup>c</sup>; I have  
proved they are not wrong; so now I will make you

<sup>a</sup> Compare the account of Christian worship given by  
Pliny to Trajan, *Epp.* x. 96, and by Justin (mid second  
century), *Apology*, 67. ●

## TERTULLIAN

Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis et disciplinae unitate et spei foedere. Coimus in coetum et congregationem, ut ad deum quasi manu facta precationibus ambiamus orantes. Haec vis deo grata est. Oramus etiam pro imperatoribus, pro ministris eorum et potestatibus, pro statu saeculi, pro rerum quiete, 2 pro mora finis. Coimus ad litterarum divinarum commemorationem, si quid praesentium temporum qualitas aut praemonere cogit aut recognoscere. Certe fidem sanctis vocibus pascimus, spem erigimus, fiduciam figimus, disciplinam praeceptorum nihilominus inculcationibus densamus; ibidem etiam 4 exhortationes, castigationes et censura divina. Nam et iudicatur magno cum pondere, ut apud certos de dei conspectu, summumque futuri iudicii praeiudicium est, si quis ita deliquerit, ut a communicatione orationis et conventus et omnis sancti commercii relegetur. Praesident probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio, sed testimonio adepti. Neque enim pretio ulla res dei constat.

5 Etiam si quod arcae genus est, non de honoraria summa quasi redemptae religionis congregatur. Modicam unusquisque stipem menstrua die, vel cum velit, et si modo velit, et si modo possit, apponit; nam nemo compellitur, sed sponte confert. Haec 6 quasi deposita pietatis sunt. Nam inde non epulis nec potaculis nec ingratis voratrinis dispensatur, sed

---

<sup>a</sup> *Nihilominus*, perhaps, because faith, hope, confidence, need to be related to something solid (*densamus*), something less subjective, and this need is met by God's law.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Pliny to Trajan, *Epp.* x. 112, 113, on entrance fees paid by members added to town senates in Asia, *honorarium decurionatus*.

see they are good. We are a society (*corpus*) with a common religious feeling, unity of discipline, a common bond of hope. We meet in gathering and 2 congregation to approach God in prayer, massing our forces to surround Him. This violence that we do Him pleases God. We pray also for Emperors, for their ministers and those in authority, for the security of the world, for peace on earth, for postponement of the end. We meet to read the books of God—if 3 anything in the nature of the times bids us look to the future or open our eyes to facts. In any case, with those holy words we feed our faith, we lift up our hope, we confirm our confidence; and no less we reinforce our teaching by inculcation of God's precepts.<sup>a</sup> There is, besides, exhortation in our gatherings, rebuke, divine censure. For judgement 4 is passed, and it carries great weight, as it must among men certain that God sees them; and it is a notable foretaste of judgement to come, if any man has so sinned as to be banished from all share in our prayer, our assembly, and all holy intercourse. Our presidents are elders of proved character, men who have reached this honour not for a price, but by character; for nothing that is God's goes for a price.

Even if there is a chest of a sort, it is not made 5 up of money paid in entrance-fees, as if religion were a matter of contract.<sup>b</sup> Every man once a month brings some modest coin—or whenever he wishes, and only if he does wish, and if he can; for nobody is compelled; it is a voluntary offering.<sup>c</sup> You might call them the trust funds of piety. For they are 6 not spent upon banquets nor drinking-parties nor

<sup>a</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. ix. 7.

## TERTULLIAN

egenis alendis humandisque et pueris ac puellis re ac parentibus destitutis, iamque domesticis senibus, item naufragis, et si qui in metallis, et si qui in insulis vel in custodiis, dumtaxat ex causa dei sectae, alumni confessionis suae fiunt.

- 7 Sed eiusmodi vel maxime dilectionis operatio notam nobis inurit penes quosdam. Vide, inquiunt, ut invicem se diligant; ipsi enim invicem oderunt: et ut pro alterutro mori sint parati; ipsi enim ad  
8 occidendum alterutrum paratiores erunt. Sed et quod fratres nos vocamus, non alias, opinor, insaniunt quam quod apud ipsos omne sanguinis nomen de affectione simulatum est. Fratres autem etiam vestri sumus, iure naturae matris unius, etsi vos parum  
9 homines, quia mali fratres. At quanto dignius fratres et dicuntur et habentur qui unum patrem deum agnoverint, qui unum spiritum biberint sanctitatis, qui de uno utero ignorantiae eiusdem ad unam lucem  
10 expaverint veritatis. Sed eo fortasse minus legitimi existimamur, quia nulla de nostra fraternitate tragoedia exclamat, vel quia ex substantia familiari fratres sumus, quae penes vos fere dirimit fraternitatem.
- 11 Itaque qui animo animaque miscemur nihil de rei communicatione dubitamus. Omnia indiscreta sunt

---

<sup>a</sup> See S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to M. Aurelius*, pp. 264-268, for trade and dining clubs, e.g., the "late drinkers" of Pompeii, also S. Angus, *Mystery Religions and Christianity*, pp. 196-199.

<sup>b</sup> Kellner takes this as "old people confined to the house." But the example of Cato's treatment of old slaves suggests the rendering in the text.

<sup>c</sup> i.e., something of a stigma.

thankless eating-houses<sup>a</sup>; but to feed the poor and to bury them, for boys and girls who lack property and parents, and then for slaves grown old<sup>b</sup> and shipwrecked mariners; and any who may be in mines, islands or prisons, provided that it is for the sake of God's school, become the pensioners of their confession.

Such work of love (for so it is) puts a mark upon us, 7 in the eyes of some.<sup>c</sup> "Look," they say, "how they love one another" (for themselves hate one another); "and how they are ready to die for each other" (for themselves will be readier to kill each other). Yes, their indignation at us for using among 8 ourselves the name of "Brothers" must really, I take it, come from nothing but the fact that among them every name of kinship so far as affection goes is false and feigned. But we are your brothers, too, by right of descent from the one mother, Nature—even if you fall short of being men because you are bad brothers. But how much more fittingly are those 9 both called brothers and treated as brothers who have come to know one Father God, who have drunk of one Spirit of holiness,<sup>d</sup> who from one womb of common ignorance have come with wonder to the one light of Truth! But perhaps the reason for our 10 being thought not quite legitimate brothers may be that no tragedy cries aloud of our brotherhood, or because our brotherhood is upheld by the family substance, which among you as a rule dissolves the fraternal tie.

So we, who are united in mind and soul, have no 11 hesitation about sharing property. All is common

<sup>a</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 13; in the Vulgate, "et omnes in uno spiritu potati sumus."

## TERTULLIAN

- 12 apud nos praeter uxores. In isto loco consortium solvimus in quo solo ceteri homines consortium exercent, qui non amicorum solummodo matrimonia usurpant, sed et sua amicis patientissime subministrant; ex illa, credo, maiorum et sapientissimorum disciplina, Graeci Socratis et Romani Catonis, qui uxores suas amicis communicaverunt, quas in matrimonium duxerant liberorum causa et alibi creandorum, nescio quidem an invitas. Quid enim de castitate curarent, quam mariti tam facile donaverant? O sapientiae Atticae, o Romanae gravitatis exemplum: lenones philosophus et censor!
- 13 Quid ergo mirum, si tanta caritas convivatur<sup>1</sup>? Nam et coenulas nostras praeterquam sceleris infames ut prodigas quoque suggillatis. De nobis scilicet Diogenis dictum est: Megarenses obsonant quasi crastina die morituri, aedificant vero quasi numquam morituri. Sed stipulam quis in alieno oculo facilius
- 14 perspicit quam in suo trabem. Tot tribubus et curiis et decuriis ructantibus acescit aër: Saliis coenaturis creditor erit necessarius: Herculanae decimarum et polluctorum sumptus tabularii supputabunt: Apaturiis, Dionysiis, mysteriis Atticis cocorum dilectus indicitur: ad fumum coenae Sarapiacae sparteoli excitabuntur. De solo triclinio Christianorum retrahatur.

<sup>1</sup> Oehler prints *convivatur*, yet takes tanta caritas to refer to Christians: Kellner joins the sentence to the previous paragraph: *Rauschen and Waltzing follow the Fuldensis.*

<sup>a</sup> Here Tertullian confuses the two Catos; it was the younger Cato who did this with his wife (Quintilian, x. 5. 13, and Strabo, 515), but he was not the Censor. Oehler suggests that the reference in ch. 11. 16 to Scipio may be blending the two Scipios. The story as to Socrates may be a loose deduction from Plato, *Rep.* v. 457.

among us—except our wives. At that point we dis- 12  
solve our partnership, which is the one place where  
the rest of men make it effective. Not only do they  
use the wives of their friends, but also most patiently  
yield their own to their friends. They follow (I  
take it) the example of those who went before them,  
the wisest of men—Greek Socrates and Roman  
Cato, who shared with their friends the wives they had  
taken in marriage, to bear children in other families  
too. And I don't know whether the wives objected; 13  
for why should they care about a chastity, which  
their husbands gave away so easily? O model of  
Attic wisdom! O pattern of Roman dignity!  
The philosopher a pander, and the censor,<sup>a</sup> too!

What wonder then, if friends so dear have a 14  
common meal? For you attack our small feasts,  
quite apart from the infamy of the crimes com-  
mitted at them, as being extravagant. Of course  
it was of Christians that Diogenes said that the  
Megarians market as if to die to-morrow, and build  
as if they were never to die at all. But any man sees  
a mote in another's eye more easily than a beam  
in his own. With all those tribes and senates and 15  
decurions belching the air grows sour. When the  
Salii<sup>b</sup> dine, the money-lender will be needed.  
Actuaries will have to reckon the cost of Hercules'  
tithes<sup>c</sup> and banquets. At the Attic Apaturia,  
Dionysia and mysteries, conscription is proclaimed  
—for cooks. The smoke of a dinner of Serapis  
will fetch out the firemen. It is only the banquet  
of Christians that calls for criticism.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Horace, *Odes*, i. 37. 2.

<sup>c</sup> See note on 14. 1.



## TERTULLIAN

- 16 Coena nostra de nomine rationem sui ostendit. Id vocatur quod dilectio penes Graecos. Quantis-  
cumque sumptibus constet, lucrum est pietatis  
nomine facere sumptum, siquidem inopes quosque  
refrigerio isto iuvamus, non qua penes vos parasiti  
adfectant ad gloriam famulandae libertatis sub aucto-  
ramento ventris inter contumelias saginandi, sed qua  
penes deum maior est contemplatio mediocrium.
- 17 Si honesta causa est convivii, reliquum ordinem  
disciplinae de causa aestimate. Quod sit de religionis  
officio, nihil vilitatis, nihil immodestiae admittit. Non  
prius discumbitur quam oratio ad deum praegustetur.  
Editur quantum esurientes capiunt, bibitur quantum  
18 pudicis utile est. Ita saturantur, ut qui meminerint  
etiam per noctem adorandum deum sibi esse; ita  
fabulantur, ut qui sciant dominum audire. Post  
aquam manualet et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis  
sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in  
medium deo canere; hinc probatur quomodo biberit.
- 19 Aequae oratio convivium dirimit. Inde disceditur  
non in catervas caesionum nec in classes discursationum  
nec in eruptiones lasciviarum, sed ad eandem  
curam modestiae et pudicitiae, ut qui non tam  
coenam coenaverint quam disciplinam.
- 20 Haec coitio Christianorum merito sane illicita, si  
illicitis par, merito damnanda, si quis de ea queritur
- 21 eo titulo quo de factionibus querela est. In cuius  
perniciem aliquando convenimus? Hoc sumus con-

---

<sup>a</sup> It will be noted that Tertullian does not here describe the eucharist, but, as he says, the *agape*.

<sup>b</sup> In one or two places of this *Apology*, *cano* means prophecy.

Our dinner shows its idea in its name ; it is called 16  
 by the Greek name for love (*agape*).<sup>a</sup> Whatever the  
 cost, it is gain to spend in piety's name, for with  
 that refreshment we help the needy. No, not, as  
 among you, parasites aspire for the glory of selling  
 their freedom, authorized by their belly to fatten  
 themselves at the cost of any insult ; no, because  
 with God there is greater consideration for those  
 of lower degree. If the motive of the banquet is 17  
 honest, take the motive as the standard of the  
 other proceedings required by our rule of life. Since  
 it turns on the duty of religion, it allows nothing vile,  
 nothing immodest. We do not take our places at  
 table until we have first tasted prayer to God. Only 18  
 so much is eaten as satisfies hunger ; only so much  
 drunk as meets the need of the modest. They satisfy  
 themselves only so far as men will who recall that  
 even during the night they must worship God ;  
 they talk as those would who know the Lord listens.  
 After water for the hands come the lights ; and  
 then each, from what he knows of the Holy Scrip-  
 tures, or from his own heart, is called before the  
 rest to sing <sup>b</sup> to God ; so that is a test of how much  
 he has drunk. Prayer in like manner ends the  
 banquet. Then we break up ; but not to form 19  
 groups for violence nor gangs for disorder, nor out-  
 bursts of lust ; but to pursue the same care for  
 self-control and chastity, as men who have dined  
 not so much on dinner as on discipline.

This gathering of Christians may properly be called 20  
 illegal, if it is like illegal gatherings ; may properly  
 be condemned, if any complain of it on the score on  
 which complaint is made of factious clubs. To whose 21  
 hurt have we ever met ? We are when assembled

## TERTULLIAN

gregati quod et dispersi, hoc universi, quod et singuli, neminem laedentes, neminem contristantes. Cum probi, cum boni coeunt, cum pii, cum casti congregantur, non est factio dicenda, sed curia.

- 1 XL. At e contrario illis nomen factionis accom-  
modandum est qui in odium bonorum et proborum  
conspirant, qui adversum sanguinem innocentium  
conclamant, praetexentes sane ad odii defensionem  
illam quoque vanitatem, quod existiment omnis  
publicae cladis, omnis popularis incommodi Christianos  
2 esse in causam. Si Tiberis ascendit in moenia, si  
Nilus non ascendit in arva, si caelum stetit, si terra  
movit, si fames, si lues, statim Christianos ad leonem !  
adclamatur. Tantos ad unum ?
- 3 Oro vos, ante Tiberium, id est ante Christi adven-  
tum quantae clades orbem et urbes ceciderunt ?  
Legimus Hieran, Anaphen et Delon et Rhodon et Co  
insulas<sup>1</sup> multis cum milibus hominum pessum abisse.
- 4 Memorat et Plato maiorem Asiae vel Africae terram  
Atlantico mari ereptam. Sed et mare Corinthium  
terrae motus ebibit, et vis undarum Lucaniam ab-  
scisam in Siciliae nomen relegavit. Haec utique  
non sine iniuria incolentium accidere potuerunt.
- 5 Ubi vero tunc, non dicam deorum vestrorum con-  
temptores Christiani, sed ipsi dei vestri, cum totum  
orbem cataclysmus abolevit, vel, ut Plato putavit,

<sup>1</sup> *v.l.* Ophiusam for Co insulas.

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Horace, *Odes*, i. 2. 13.

<sup>b</sup> *i.e.*, no rain. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, ii. 3, quotes the  
proverb: "Pluvia deficit, causa Christiani sunt."

<sup>c</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 90. 205, refers to Plato's Atlantis  
as overwhelmed by the Atlantic, and compares other more

just what we are when apart; taken together the same as singly; we injure none; we grieve none. When decent people, when good men, gather, when the pious and when the chaste assemble, that is not to be called a faction; it is a Senate.

XL. On the other hand the name faction may 1 properly be given to those who join to hate the good and honest, who shout for the blood of the innocent, who use as a pretext to defend their hatred the absurdity that they take the Christians to be the cause of every disaster to the State, of every misfortune of the people. If the Tiber reaches the 2 walls,<sup>a</sup> if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky doesn't move<sup>b</sup> or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, the cry is at once: "The Christians to the lion!" What, all of them to one lion?

I ask you—before Tiberius, that is before Christ 3 came, what great disasters smote the world and the city? We read that Hieria, Anaphe, and Delos and Rhodes and Cos, whole islands with thousands of inhabitants went to ruin. Plato tells of a land greater 4 than Asia or Africa swept away by the Atlantic.<sup>c</sup> More still, an earthquake swallowed the Corinthian sea, and the force of the waters tore off Lucania from Italy and banished it to bear the name Sicily. I hardly suppose these things could have happened without hurt to the inhabitants.

Where, then, in those days, were—I won't say the 5 Christians who despise your gods—but your gods themselves, where were they when the deluge blotted out a whole world, or, as Plato thought, merely the historical disasters of the same kind in the Mediterranean area.

## TERTULLIAN

- 6 campestre solummodo? Posteriores enim illos clade  
diluvii contestantur ipsae urbes in quibus nati mor-  
tuique sunt, etiam quas condiderunt; neque enim  
alias hodiernum manerent nisi et ipsae posthumae  
7 cladis illius. Nondum Iudaeum ab Aegypto examen  
Palaestina suscepit nec illic Christianae sectae  
origo consederat, cum regiones adfines eius Sodoma  
et Gomorra igneus imber exussit. Olet adhuc incendio  
terra, et si qua illic arborum poma, conantur oculis  
8 tenus, ceterum contacta cinerescunt. Sed nec Tuscia  
iam tunc atque Campania de Christianis querebantur,  
cum Vulsinios de caelo, Pompeios de suo monte  
perfudit ignis. Nemo adhuc Romae deum verum  
adorabat cum Hannibal apud Cannas per Romanos  
9 anulos caedes suas in odio metiebatur. Omnes dei  
vestri ab omnibus colebantur, cum ipsum Capitolium  
Senones occupaverant. Et bene quod, si quid adversi  
urbibus accidit, eadem clades templorum quae et  
moenium fuerunt, ut iam hoc revincam non ab eis  
evenire, quia et ipsis evenit.
- 10 Semper humana gens male de deo meruit. Primo  
quidem ut inofficiosa eius, quem cum intellegeret ex  
parte, non requisivit, sed et alios insuper sibi com-  
mentata quos coleret; dehinc quod non inquirendo  
innocentiae magistrum et nocentiae iudicem et  
exactorem omnibus vitiis et criminibus inolevit.
- 11 Ceterum si requisisset, sequebatur, ut cognosceret  
requisitum et recognitum observaret et observatum

---

<sup>a</sup> Here, it is pointed out, he slips. The Gauls took all but the Capitol. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, ii. 22, asks where "haec numinum turba" was when the Gauls captured and burnt Rome: "an praesentes forte dormiebant?"

plains ? For your gods are later than the catastrophe 6  
of the flood, and that is proved by the actual cities in  
which they were born and died, yes, and which they  
founded ; for otherwise they would not remain till  
to-day, unless they were later than that catastrophe.  
Not yet had Palestine received the swarm of Jews 7  
from Egypt, the race whence came the Christian  
school had not yet settled there, when a rain of fire  
burnt up Sodom and Gomorrha, the regions on its  
borders. The land still smells of burning ; and, if any  
apples are on the trees, the trees' endeavour is but  
to reach the eye ; touch them, and they are ashes.  
Nor were Tuscany in those old days and Campania 8  
complaining of the Christians, when fire from heaven  
drenched Volsinii, fire from its own mountain Pompeii.  
No one yet in Rome was worshipping the true God,  
when Hannibal at Cannae measured his massacre by  
the bushels of Roman rings. All your gods were 9  
being worshipped by all of you, when the Senones  
took the Capitol itself.<sup>a</sup> And it is just as well that,  
whatever disaster befel the cities, there was the same  
ruin for temples as for city walls ; so that I can make  
the point, that this did not come from the gods be-  
cause it came to them.

The human race has always deserved ill of God, 10  
first as being careless of Him—for, though under-  
standing Him in part, it not only failed to seek  
Him but quickly devised other gods for its worship ;  
next,—because, refusing to seek the Teacher of  
innocence, the Judge and Avenger of guilt, it  
grew inured to every vice and crime. But if it 11  
had sought Him out, it would follow that it would  
recognize Him when found ; and, known, it would  
worship Him ; and God worshipped it would find

## TERTULLIAN

- propitium magis experiretur quam iratum. Eundem  
 igitur nunc quoque scire debet iratum quem et retro  
 12 semper, priusquam Christiani nominarentur. Cuius  
 bonis utebatur ante editis quam sibi deos fingeret,  
 cur non ab eo etiam mala intellegat evenire cuius  
 bona esse non sensit? Illius rea est cuius et ingrata.  
 13 Et tamen si pristinas clades comparemus, leviora  
 nunc accidunt, ex quo Christianos a deo orbis accepit.  
 Ex eo enim et innocentia saeculi iniquitates tempe-  
 14 ravit et deprecatores dei esse coeperunt. Denique  
 cum ab imbris aestiva hiberna suspendunt et annus  
 in cura est, vos quidem cotidie pasti statimque  
 pransuri, balneis et cauponiis et lupanaribus operan-  
 tibus, aquilicia Iovi immolatis, nudipedalia populo  
 denuntiatis, caelum apud Capitolium quaeritis, nubila  
 de laquearibus expectatis, aversi ab ipso et deo et  
 15 caelo: nos vero ieiuniis aridi et omni continentia  
 expressi, ab omni vitae fruge dilati, in sacco et cinere  
 volutantes invidia caelum tundimus, deum tangimus,  
 et cum misericordiam extorserimus, Iupiter honoratur.  
 1 XLI. Vos igitur inopportuni rebus humanis, vos rei  
 publicorum incommodorum indices semper, apud  
 quos deus spernitur, statuæ adorantur. Etenim  
 credibilius haberi debet eum irasci qui neglegatur  
 quam qui coluntur, aut nae illi iniquissimi, si propter

---

<sup>a</sup> This is the agreed translation, reached by the aid of Cyprian, who twice copies the passage but in more ordinary Latin: *De Mortalitate*, 8 "et quando imbrem nubila serena suspendunt, omnibus siccitas una est"; and *Ad Demetrianum*, 2 "imbres et pluvias serena longa suspendunt."

<sup>b</sup> For this use of *annus* cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, 14. 5 "nec arare terā aut exspectare annum."

more propitious than God angry. Mankind should know the same God to be angry to-day, who was ever angry of old, before ever Christians were named. It was His blessings that mankind used, 12 given before ever men fashioned gods for themselves; then why does humanity not understand that evils also come from Him, whom it did not realize to be author of the blessings? The race is guilty before Him to whom it is ungrateful.

And yet if we compare ancient disasters, the 13 troubles nowadays are lighter, since the world received the Christians from God. Since that day innocence has tempered the sins of the world, and there have begun to be intercessors with God. For in- 14 stance, when prolonged summer delays winter's rain<sup>a</sup> and the crops cause anxiety,<sup>b</sup> you, well fed every day, and soon to eat again—baths, taverns, brothels all at work—you sacrifice rain-offerings to Jove, enjoin the bare-foot procession on the people, seek heaven at the Capitol, look for rain from the temple ceilings, with your backs turned to God Himself and to heaven. We, parched with fasting, pinched with every austerity, abstaining from all food that sustains life, wallowing in sackcloth and ashes, importune heaven 15 with reproach, we touch God; and then, when we have wrung mercy from Him,—Jupiter has all the glory!

XLI. It is you, then, who are the danger to 1 mankind, it is you who bring upon us public misfortunes—you, by your contempt for God and your worship of statues. In any case it ought to be more credible that He is angry, seeing that He is neglected rather than they who are worshipped. Otherwise, your gods are most unjust, if because of the Christians



## TERTULLIAN

Christianos etiam cultores suos laedunt, quos separare deberent a meritis Christianorum.

2 Hoc, inquit, et in deum vestrum repercutere est, si quod et ipse patiatur, propter profanos etiam suos cultores laedi. Admittite prius dispositiones eius, et  
3 non retorquebitis. Qui enim semel aeternum iudicium destinavit post saeculi finem, non praecipitat discretionem, quae est condicio iudicii, ante saeculi finem. Aequalis est interim super omne hominum genus et indulgens et increpans. Communia voluit esse et commoda profanis et incommoda suis, ut pari consortio omnes et lenitatem eius et severitatem ex-  
4 periremur. Quia haec ita didicimus apud ipsum, diligimus lenitatem, metuimus severitatem, vos contra utramque despicitis : et sequitur ut omnes saeculi plagae nobis, si forte, in admonitionem, vobis in castigationem a deo obveniant.

5 Atquin nos nullo modo laedimur ; inprimis quia nihil nostra refert in hoc aevo nisi de eo quam celeriter excedere, dehinc, quia si quid adversi infligitur, vestris meritis deputatur. Sed etsi aliqua nos quoque praestringunt ut vobis cohaerentes, lactamur magis recognitione divinarum praedicationum, confirmantium scilicet fiduciam et fidem  
6 spei nostrae. Sin vero ab eis quos colitis omnia vobis mala eveniunt nostri causa, quid colere perseveratis tam ingratos, tam iniustos, qui magis vos in dolore Christianorum iuvare et adserere debuerant<sup>1</sup>?

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler prints here six words, quos separare deberent a meritis Christianorum, which the Fuldensis omits. The change from debuerant to deberent is odd, and it seems likely that the words are an accidental repetition from § 1.*

they injure their own worshippers too, whom they ought to keep clear of the punishment of the Christians.

“ But this,” you say, “ can be retorted upon your 2 God too, since He Himself because of the profane suffers His own worshippers to be injured.” First admit His disposition of events, and then you will not turn this against Him. For He who has ordained 3 eternal judgement once for all after the end of the world does not hasten to make that separation (which is the essence of the judgement) before the end of the world. Meantime He treats all mankind equally, both in concession and in warning. He has wished the pleasant things of life to be shared by the profane, the unpleasant by His own, that by an equality of lot we might make trial of His gentleness and His severity. Because we have thus learnt of Him, we love His 4 gentleness, we dread His severity ; you, on the other hand, despise both the one and the other. It follows that all the plagues of the world (it may be) come on us for admonition, on you for chastisement, from God.

Yet we are none the worse for it ; first, because 5 nothing matters to us in this age but to escape from it with all speed ; and next, because, if any trouble is inflicted upon us, we set it down to your sins. But, even if things now and then touch us in passing because we live so close to you, we only rejoice the more to recognize the divine predictions, and they (to be sure) confirm our confidence, our faith in our hope. But if, on the other hand, all these evils come on you 6 from the gods you worship, and come because of us, why persevere in worshipping gods so unjust and so ungrateful, who ought rather to be helping and supporting you while the Christians are suffering ?

## TERTULLIAN

1 XLII. Sed alio quoque iniuriarum titulo postula-  
mur, et infructuosi in negotiis dicimur. Quo pacto  
homines vobiscum degentes, eiusdem victus, habitus,  
instructus, eiusdem ad vitam necessitatis? Neque  
enim Brachmanae aut Indorum gymnosophistae  
2 sumus, silvicolae et exules vitae. Meminimus  
gratiam debere nos deo, domino, creatori: nullum  
fructum operum eius repudiamus: plane temperamus,  
ne ultra modum aut perperam utamur. Itaque non  
sine foro, non sine macello, non sine balneis, tabernis,  
officinis, stabulis, nundinis vestris ceterisque commer-  
3 ciis cohabitamus in hoc saeculo. Navigamus et nos  
vobiscum et militamus et rusticamur et mercamur;  
proinde miscemus artes, operas nostras publicamus  
usui vestro.<sup>1</sup> Quomodo infructuosi videmur negotiis  
vestris, cum quibus et de quibus vivimus, non scio.

4 Sed si caerimonias tuas non frequento, attamen et  
illa die homo sum. Non labor diluculo Saturnalibus,  
ne et noctem et diem perdam, attamen labor honesta  
hora et salubri, quae mihi et calorem et sanguinem  
servet; rigere et pallere post lavacrum mortuus  
5 possum. Non in publico Liberalibus discumbo, quod  
bestiariis supremam coenantibus mos est, attamen  
6 ubiubi<sup>2</sup> de copiis tuis coeno. Non emo capiti coronam.  
Quid tua interest, emptis nihilominus floribus quo-  
modo utar? Puto gratius esse liberis et solutis et  
undique vagis. Sed etsi in coronam coactis, nos

<sup>1</sup> *The text is that adopted by Waltzing: Oehler reads et mercatus proinde miscemus, artes, opera nostra.*

<sup>2</sup> *Oehler keeps ubi.*

---

<sup>as</sup> For the Brahmins *cf.* Strabo, xv. pp. 712 ff.

XLII. But there is another charge of wrong-doing 1  
upon the sheet against us. We are said to be un-  
profitable in business. How so—when we are human  
beings and live alongside of you—men with the same  
ways, the same dress and furniture, the same neces-  
sities, if we are to live? For we are not Brahmans,  
naked sages of India, forest-dwellers, exiles from life.<sup>a</sup>  
We remember that we owe gratitude to God, the 2  
Lord, the Creator. We reject no fruit of His labours.  
We are of course temperate—not to use His gifts to  
excess or amiss. So, not without your forum, not  
without your meat-market, not without your baths,  
shops, factories, your inns and market-days, and the  
rest of the life of buying and selling, we live with you  
—in this world. We sail ships, we as well as you, and 3  
along with you; we go to the wars, to the country, to  
market with you. Our arts and yours work together;  
our labour is openly at your service. How we can  
seem unprofitable to your business, when we live with  
you and our living depends on you, I do not know.

Even if I do not attend your rituals, well, I am a 4  
man on that day as much as any other. I do not bathe  
at dawn on the Saturnalia—I do not wish to lose both  
night and day; but I do bathe at the proper and  
healthful hour, which will keep my bodily heat and  
my blood in order; I can be stiff and pale after my  
bath when I am dead. Nor do I recline to eat in 5  
public at the Liberalia, which is the habit of the  
beast-fighters taking their last meal; but wherever  
I dine, it is on your supplies. I do not buy a garland 6  
for my head. What difference does it make to you,  
how I use the flowers, if in any case I buy them? I  
think them more delightful when free, untied, wander-  
ing as they will. But suppose they please also when

## TERTULLIAN

coronam naribus novimus ; viderint qui per capillum  
 7 odorantur. Spectaculis non convenimus ; quae  
 tamen apud illos coetus venditantur si desideravero,  
 liberius de propriis locis sumam. Thura plane non  
 emimus. Si Arabiae queruntur, sciant Sabaei pluris  
 et carioris suas merces Christianis sepeliendis pro-  
 fligari quam deis fumigandis.

8 Certe, inquitis, templorum vectigalia cotidie deco-  
 quant : stipes quotusquisque iam iactat ? Non enim  
 sufficimus et hominibus et deis vestris mendicantibus  
 opem ferre, nec putamus aliis quam petentibus  
 inertiendum. Denique porrigat manum Iupiter et  
 accipiat, cum interim plus nostra misericordia insumit  
 9 vicatim quam vestra religio templatim. Sed cetera  
 vectigalia gratias Christianis agent ex fide depen-  
 dentibus debitum, qua alieno fraudando abstinemus,  
 ut, si ineatur quantum vectigalibus pereat fraude et  
 mendaciostrarum professionum, facile ratio haberi  
 possit, unius speciei querela compensata pro commodo  
 ceterarum rationum.

1 XLIII. Plane confitebor, quinam, si forte, vere de  
 sterilitate Christianorum conqueri possint. Primi  
 erunt lenones, perductores, aquarioli, tum sicarii,  
 venenarii, magi, item aruspices, arioli, mathematici.

2 His infructuosos esse magnus est fructus. Et tamen  
 quodcunque dispendium est rei vestrae per hanc  
 sectam, cum aliquo praesidio compensari potest.  
 Quanti habetis, non dico iam qui<sup>1</sup> de vobis daemonia

<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler reads* qui iam.

worked up into a garland, *we* know a garland by our noses ; let them see to it who smell through their hair ! We do not gather at the games ; but the wares 7 hawked at those assemblages, if I should wish them, I shall get more freely from their proper places. We certainly don't buy incense. If the lands of Araby complain, let the Sabaeans know that their wares are lavished at a higher and dearer price on burying Christians than on fumigating gods.

"At any rate," you say, "the revenues of the 8 temples are breaking down daily ; how many are they who toss their coins in there ?" We cannot cope with both men and your gods begging together ; and do not think alms should be given to others than those who ask. Come, let Jupiter hold out his hand and receive ! In the meantime our compassion spends more street by street than your religion temple by temple. But the other revenues may be 9 grateful to Christians paying what is due with the same good faith that keeps us from cheating other men ; so that, if an inquiry were made, how much is lost to the public exchequer by the fraud and lying of your declarations, an account could easily be struck—the complaint on one side balanced by the gain in the rest of the accounts.

XLIII. I will tell you plainly, who they are who 1 may perhaps truly complain of the unprofitableness of Christians. First will come the panders, the pimps, and their agents ; next assassins, poisoners, magicians ; thirdly wizards, soothsayers, astrologers. That we 2 should be unprofitable to these is a great profit. And yet whatever loss your interests may show due to this sect, it can be balanced by a certain protection, I think. What price do you put—I do not say now,

## TERTULLIAN

excutiant, non dico iam qui pro vobis quoque vero deo preces sternant, quia forte non creditis, sed a quibus nihil timere possitis ?

1 XLIV. At enim illud detrimentum reipublicae  
tam grande quam verum nemo circumspicit, illam  
iniuriam civitatis nullus expendit, cum tot iusti im-  
2 pendimur, cum tot innocentes erogamur. Vestros  
enim iam contestamur actus, qui cotidie iudicandis  
custodiis praesidetis, qui sententiis elogiis dispungitis.  
Tot a vobis nocentes variis criminum elogiis recen-  
sentur : quis illic sicarius, quis manticularius, quis  
sacrilegus aut corruptor aut lavantium praedo, quis  
ex illis etiam Christianus adscribitur ? aut cum  
Christiani suo titulo offeruntur, quis ex illis etiam  
3 talis quales tot nocentes ? De vestris semper aestuat  
carcer, de vestris semper metalla suspirant, de vestris  
semper bestiae saginantur, de vestris semper mune-  
rarii noxiorum greges pascunt. Nemo illic Christianus  
nisi plane tantum Christianus, aut si et aliud, iam  
non Christianus.

1 XLV. Nos ergo soli innocentes. Quid mirum, si  
necesse est ? Enimvero necesse est. Innocentiam  
a deo edocti et perfecte eam novimus, ut a per-  
fecto magistro revelatam, et fideliter custodimus,  
2 ut ab in contemptibili dispectore mandatam. Vobis  
autem, humana aestimatio innocentiam tradidit,

on those who drive demons out of you—I do not say now, on those who offer prayers to the true God for you as well as for themselves, because, perhaps, you don't believe it—but on those from whom you can have nothing to fear?

XLIV. Yet there is one loss to the State, as great 1 as it is real, and no one gives it a thought; one injury to the common weal, and nobody computes it; when upright men, such as we, are wasted in such numbers, in such numbers are done to death, innocent as we are. We challenge you to produce your records, 2 you who day by day preside over the trial of prisoners, who pass the sentence and clear the calendar. So many guilty persons are examined by you, with such and such crimes charged against them; what assassin on the list, what cutpurse, what temple-robber, or bribery agent, or bath-thief, is also described as a Christian? Or when Christians, charged as Christians, are brought into court, who among them is of the same sort as all those criminals? It is with your kind that 3 the jail is always steaming; with the sighs of your kind the mines always resounding; with your kind the wild beasts are fed; from your kind the givers of public shows always maintain their herds of the condemned. Not a Christian on that list, unless it be simply as a Christian; or, if any further charge be entered against him, he is no Christian.

XLV. We, then, alone are innocent. What is 1 surprising in that, if it must be so? And it must be. Innocence we have been taught by God; in its perfection we know it, as revealed by a perfect teacher; faithfully we keep it as committed to us by one who reads the heart and cannot be despised. It was but man's opinion that gave you your idea of 2



## TERTULLIAN

humana item dominatio imperavit ; inde nec plenae nec adeo timendae estis disciplinae ad innocentiae veritatem. Tanta est prudentia hominis ad demonstrandum bonum quanta auctoritas ad exigendum ;  
3 tam illa falli facilis quam ista contemni. Atque adeo quid plenius, dicere : Non occides, an docere : Ne irascaris quidem ? Quid perfectius, prohibere adulterium, an etiam ab oculorum solitaria concupiscentia arcere ? Quid eruditius, de maleficio, an et de maliloquio interdicere ? Quid instructius, iniuriam non  
4 permittere, an nec vicem iniuriae sinere ? Dum tamen sciatis ipsas leges quoque vestras quae videntur ad innocentiam pergere de divina lege, ut antiquiore forma, mutuatas. Diximus iam de Moysi aetate.  
5 Sed quanta auctoritas legum humanarum, cum illas et evadere homini contingat et plerumque in admissis delitiscanti, et aliquando contemnere ex  
6 voluntate vel necessitate deliquenti ? Recogitate ea etiam pro brevitate supplicii cuiuslibet, non tamen ultra mortem remansuri. Sic et Epicurus omnem cruciatum doloremque depretiat, modicum quidem contemptibilem pronuntiando, magnum vero non  
7 diuturnum. Enimvero nos qui sub deo omnium speculatore dispungimur, quique aeternam ab eo poenam providemus merito, soli<sup>1</sup> innocentiae occurrimus, et pro scientiae plenitudine et pro latebrarum difficultate et pro magnitudine cruciatus non diuturni, verum sempiterni, eum timentes quem timere debbit et ipse qui timentes iudicat, deum, non proconsulem timentes.

<sup>1</sup> *Perhaps better punctuate* : providemus, merito soli.

<sup>a</sup> Cf. Cicero, *De Finibus*, ii. 7. 22 " iam doloris medicamenta illa Epicurea tamquam de narthecio proment : ' si gravis, brevis ; si longa, levis.' "

## APOLOGETICUS, XLV. 2-7

innocence, man's authority that enjoined it. So your rule of life is neither complete nor does it inspire such fear as to lead to true innocence. Man's skill to make clear what is truly good is no more than his authority to enforce it ; the one may as easily be mistaken as the other despised. And to come to the 3 point, which is the ampler saying : Thou shalt not kill, or, Do not even be angry ? Which is more perfect, to forbid adultery or to prohibit a single lustful look ? Which is the deeper law, to restrain from doing evil or from even speaking it ? Which is the more thorough, not to permit the doing of an injury or to allow no retaliation ? Though at the same time 4 you must recognize that your own laws, which seem to tend to innocence, drew from the divine law, which is the more ancient pattern. We have spoken already of the date of Moses.

But what authority can man's laws have, when a 5 man may have the luck to evade them, again and again undiscovered in his guilt, sometimes to despise them, as he breaks them of choice or of necessity ? Think over all this, remembering how short is any 6 punishment that will not continue after death. That is why Epicurus makes light of all torture and pain ; if it is slight, he says, you may despise it, if it is great it will not be long.<sup>a</sup> Yes ! We who are examined 7 in the sight of God who sees all, we who foresee an eternal punishment from His hand, we well may be the only ones to attain innocence ; since, at once from fullness of knowledge, from the difficulty of concealment, from the greatness of the torture (not *long*, but eternal), we fear Him, whom he, too, must fear who judges us who fear—who fear God, that is, and not the proconsul.

XLVI. We have stood our ground, I think, on 1 every charge brought against us, and the demand therewith made for the blood of the Christians. We have set forth our whole position and our method of proving the case set forth—to wit, by the evidence and antiquity of the divine books, and by the confession of spiritual powers. Who will undertake to refute this case,—not by dialectic, but in the same form in which we have established our proof, on the basis of truth ?

Still, while every man recognizes our truth, mean- 2 while unbelief (convinced though it be of the goodness of our school, which experience and intercourse by now have established) counts our school no divine affair at all, but rather a variety of philosophy. “The philosophers,” says he, “they teach the same things, make the same professions—innocence, justice, patience, sobriety, chastity.” Then why, if, so far 3 as teaching goes, we are compared with them, why are we not put on an equality with them in freedom and impunity of teaching ? Or why, since we are all on one level, why are not they compelled to discharge those duties, our refusal of which brings us into danger ? For who compels a philosopher to sacrifice, 4 or to take an oath, or to set out silly lamps at mid-day ? Not a bit of it ! They openly destroy your gods, they attack your superstitions in their treatises, and you applaud. Yes, and many of them bark against the Emperors too, and you sustain them. You are more ready to reward them with statues and stipends than to condemn them to the beasts. Quite right too ! Philosophers is what they are called, not Christians. This name of “philosopher” 5 does not drive out demons. Why not, seeing that

## TERTULLIAN

cum secundum deos philosophi daemones deputent. Socratis vox est : Si daemonium permittat. Idem et cum aliquid de veritate sapiebat deos negans, Aesculapio tamen gallinaceum prosecari iam in fine iubebat, credo ob honorem patris eius, quia Socratem  
 6 Apollo sapientissimum omnium cecinit. O Apollinem inconsideratum ! Sapientiae testimonium reddidit ei viro qui negabat deos esse.

In quantum odium<sup>1</sup> flagrat veritas, in tantum qui eam ex fide praestat offendit ; qui autem adulterat et adfectat, hoc maxime nomine gratiam pangit  
 7 apud insectatores veritatis. Quam inlusores et corruptores inimice<sup>2</sup> philosophi adfectant veritatem et adfectando corrumpunt, ut qui gloriam captant, Christiani et necessario appetunt et integre praestant,  
 8 ut qui saluti suae curant. Adeo neque de scientia neque de disciplina, ut putatis, aequamur. Quid enim Thales ille princeps physicorum sciscitanti Croeso de divinitate certum renuntiavit, com-  
 9 meatus deliberandi saepe frustratus ? Deum quilibet opifex Christianus et invenit et ostendit et exinde totum quod in deum quaeritur re quoque adsignat ; licet Plato adfirmet factitatore universitatis neque

<sup>1</sup> odio also is read, and is easier, and perhaps right.

<sup>2</sup> Text uncertain; mimice has the same number of strokes, is very attractive, and not unattested. "The philosophers have the actor's spirit."

---

<sup>a</sup> They destroy the gods, why not expel the demons, who are inferior to the gods ?

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 118. Aesculapius was the son of Apollo and Coronis. At Delphi Apollo declared to Chaere-  
 200

philosophers rank demons below gods?<sup>a</sup> It is the voice of Socrates: "if the *daemonion* permit." Socrates, again,—though he did know something of the truth and denied the gods—at the end of his life he ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Aesculapius<sup>b</sup>—I suppose, out of compliment to Aesculapius's father; for Apollo declared Socrates to be the wisest of men. Absent-minded Apollo! He bore 6 witness to the wisdom of the man who denied the existence of gods!

The measure of the hatred that Truth sets ablaze gives the measure of his offence who believes it and maintains it. The man who corrupts Truth, who makes a false show of it, on this very score wins goodwill among the enemies of Truth. Truth? The philo- 7 sophers, in their ill-will, mock it and corrupt it; they pretend to truth; their pretending to it means its corruption; it is glory that is their real aim. But Christians are bound to seek Truth, and they offer it uncorrupted, as those needs must who think of their salvation. So we are not on a level, as you suppose, 8 either as to knowledge or way of life. Take Thales,<sup>c</sup> first of natural philosophers; what certain word had he for Croesus who asked him about godhead,—and all those adjournments conceded to him for reflexion were in vain? But God—there is no Christian 9 working-man but finds God, shows Him, assigns to Him in actual deed all that is sought for in God; though Plato affirms that the maker of the universe

phon, ἀνδρῶν πάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτατος; cf. Diogenes Laertius, ii. 18. 37.

<sup>c</sup> Cf. ch. 19, the passage inserted from codex Fuldensis. Minucius Felix ch. 13 tells the story of Simonides and Hiero as does Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, i. 22. 60.

## TERTULLIAN

inveniri facilem et inventum enarrari in omnes difficilem.

- 10 Ceterum si de pudicitia provocemus, lego partem sententiae Atticae, in Socratem corruptorem adolescentium pronuntiatum. Sexum nec femineum mutat Christianus.<sup>1</sup> Novi et Phrynen meretricem Diogenis supra recumbentis ardori subantem, audio et quendam Speusippum de Platonis schola in adulterio  
11 perisse. Christianus uxori suae soli masculus nascitur. Democritus excaecando semetipsum, quod mulieres sine concupiscentia aspicere non posset et doleret si  
12 tetur. At Christianus salvis oculis feminas non videt; animo adversus libidinem caecus est.
- 13 Si de probitate defendam, ecce lutulentis pedibus Diogenes superbos Platonis toros alia superbia deculcat: Christianus nec in pauperem superbit. Si de modestia certem, ecce Pythagoras apud Thurios, Zenon apud Prienses tyrannidem adfectant:  
14 Christianus vero nec aedilitatem. Si de aequanimitate congregiar, Lycurgus apocarteresin optavit, quod leges eius Lacones emendassent; Christianus

<sup>1</sup> *The Fuldensis reads*: Christianus ad sexum nec femina mutat. *The commoner reading above looks like a desperate correction.*

---

<sup>a</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, 28 E, a sentence most frequently quoted in this period.

<sup>b</sup> This is surely *argumentum ad hominem*; Tertullian, a lawyer, addresses magistrates, and cites the decision of a court, as such. Ordinary people will not be impressed with this sort of pleading, but he means to hurt.

is not easy to be found, and, when found, he is hard to declare to all men.<sup>a</sup>

But if we challenge on the ground of chastity, 10 I read a part of the Athenian sentence on Socrates, declared a corrupter of lads.<sup>b</sup> The Christian, so far as sex is concerned, is content with the woman.<sup>c</sup> I know the story of Phryne, the harlot, submitting to the passions of Diogenes. I am also told that one Speusippus, of Plato's school, was killed in the act of adultery. The Christian is born masculine for his 11 wife and for no other woman. Democritus blinded himself, because he could not look on women without desire, and found it pain not to be satisfied; he admitted his incontinence by his cure for it. But 12 the Christian keeps his eyes and does *not* see women; in his mind lies his blindness to lust.

If I am to make a defence as to modesty of 13 behaviour, look! there is Diogenes with muddy feet trampling the proud couches of Plato—with another pride<sup>d</sup>; the Christian has no pride, even where the poor man is concerned. If self-restraint is the issue, why, there is Pythagoras at Thuri, and there is Zeno in Priene, aiming at tyranny; the Christian does not even aspire to be aedile. If I am to meet you on 14 the issue of the calm mind, Lycurgus wished to starve himself to death, because the Spartans had altered his laws; the Christian even when condemned to

<sup>c</sup> What exactly Tertullian wrote here seems beyond recovery. The two French translators take different views of the meaning. The Abbé de Gourcy: "Jamais on ne reprochera à un chrétien de violer les lois de la nature;" and Waltzing: "Un chrétien ne change pas même de femme."

<sup>d</sup> Cf. Diogenes Laertius, vi. 2. 26; Plato rejoins: ἐτέρῳ γε τύφῳ, Διόγενης.

## TERTULLIAN

- etiam damnatus gratias agit. Si de fide conparem, Anaxagoras depositum hospitibus<sup>1</sup> denegavit : Christianus et extra fidelis vocatur. Si de simplicitate consistam, Aristoteles familiarem suum Hermian turpiter loco excedere fecit : Christianus nec inimicum suum laedit. Idem Aristoteles tam turpiter Alexandro regendo potius adolatur, quam Plato Dionysio<sup>2</sup> ventris gratia venditur. Aristippus in purpura sub magna gravitatis superficie nepotatur, et Hippias dum civitati insidias disponit, occiditur. Hoc pro suis omni atrocitate dissipatis nemo unquam temptavit Christianus.
- 17 Sed dicet aliquis etiam de nostris excedere quosdam a regula disciplinae. Desinunt tamen Christiani haberi penes nos, philosophi vero illi cum talibus factis in
- 18 nomine et honore sapientiae perseverant. Adeo quid simile philosophus et Christianus ? Graeciae discipulus et caeli ? famae negotiator et vitae ? verborum et factorum operator, et rerum aedificator et destructor ? amicus et inimicus erroris ? veritatis interpolator et integrator et expressor, et furator eius et custos ?<sup>3</sup>
- 1 XLVII. Antiquior omnibus veritas, nisi fallor, et

<sup>1</sup> *The Fuldensis reads hospitibus, which is almost demanded by the antithesis : Oehler keeps hostibus.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Fuldensis reads Dionysio, and the translation is supported by Kellner and Waltzing. The reading a Dionysio, which Oehler prints, seems to spoil the parallel. The passage in Tatian is explicit : ὑπὸ Διονυσίου διὰ γαστριμαργίας ἐπιπράσκειτο, but the last word is a restoration.*

<sup>3</sup> *The text in these last lines shows variants.*

---

<sup>a</sup> *Cf. ch. 1. 12. In the Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs, a very brief story, not "written up" at all, the Christians say very little, beyond confessing their faith, and ejaculating, on condemnation, Deo gratias.*

<sup>b</sup> *Cf. Pliny to Trajan, Epp. 96, on Christian honesty.*

<sup>c</sup> *This may be a reference to a tale in Diogenes Laertius,*



death gives thanks.<sup>a</sup> If I make the comparison on honesty, Anaxagoras refused to return the deposit to his guests ; the Christian outside his group as well as inside it is called faithful.<sup>b</sup> If I take my stand 15 on plain dealing, Aristotle shamelessly made his friend Hermias yield him place <sup>c</sup> ; the Christian injures not even his enemy. The same Aristotle's shameful tutorship of Alexander is equivalent to flattery ; Plato—no better—fawns upon Dionysius to gratify his belly. Aristippus in purple, with great affecta- 16 tion of seriousness, lives a wanton life ; and Hippias <sup>d</sup> is killed for plotting against his city—a thing no Christian ever attempted in revenge for his friends scattered with every kind of cruelty.

But someone will say that in our case too there are 17 some who desert the rule of our teaching. Then they cease to be counted Christians among us ; but those philosophers, despite deeds such as those mentioned, continue in all the name and fame of wisdom among you. But then what have philosopher and Christian 18 in common,—the disciple of Greece and the disciple of heaven,—the business of the one with reputation, of the other with salvation,—the man of words and the man of deeds,—the builder and the destroyer,—the friend and the foe of error,—the man who corrupts the truth, and the man who restores it and proclaims it—the thief of truth and its guardian ?

XLVII. Truth is older than all else, if I mistake 1 v. 1. 4, of Aristotle marrying a woman from the harem of Hermeias ; but what has it to do with *simplicitas* ?

<sup>a</sup> He seems to mix two men of this name, Hippias, the tyrant, son of Pisistratus, and the sophist Hippias of Elis. These scandals about the philosophers seem to lack attestation in extant literature. It looks very much as if Tertullian had Tatian's *Oratio ad Graecos*, ch. 2, before him. •

## TERTULLIAN

hoc mihi proficit antiquitas praestructa divinae litteraturae, quo facile credatur thesaurum eam fuisse posteriori cuique sapientiae. Et si non onus iam voluminis temperarem, excurrerem in hanc quoque  
 2 probationem. Quis poëtarum, quis sophistarum, qui non omnino de prophetarum fonte potaverit? Inde igitur philosophi sitim ingenii sui rigaverunt, ut quae de nostris habent, ea nos conparent illis. Inde, opinor, et a quibusdam philosophia quoque eiecta est, a  
 3 Thebaeis dico, et a Spartiatis et Argivis, dum ad nostra conantur, et homines gloriae, ut diximus, et eloquentiae solius libidinosi, si quid in sanctis [scripturis]<sup>1</sup> offenderunt digestis, ex proprio instituto curiositatis ad propria opera verterunt, neque satis credentes divina esse, quo minus interpolarent, neque satis intellegentes, ut adhuc tunc subnubila, etiam ipsis Iudaeis obumbrata, quorum propria  
 4 videbantur. Nam et si qua simplicitas erat veritatis, eo magis scrupulositas humana fidem aspernata mutabat,<sup>2</sup> per quod in incertum miscuerunt etiam quod invenerant certum.

5 Inventum enim solummodo deum non ut invenerant disputaverunt, ut et de qualitate et de natura eius et  
 6 de sede disceptent. Alii incorporalem adseverant, alii corporalem, ut tam Platonici quam Stoici; alii ex atomis, alii ex numeris, qua Epicurus et Pythagoras, alius ex igni, qua Heraclito visum est: et Platonici

<sup>1</sup> scripturis, which Oehler keeps, looks very like an explanation. It is not in the codex Fuldensis.

<sup>2</sup> mutabat is so obvious and easy a correction that the variant nutabat may very well be Tertullian's word.

<sup>a</sup> i.e., before Christ's coming.

not ; and the antiquity (already shown) of the divine literature helps me here, in making it credible that it was the storehouse for all later wisdom. And if I were not for moderating the weight of my volume, here is another line of proof on which I could digress. Who 2 among the poets, who among the sophists, has not drunk from the fountain of the prophets ? From them the philosophers have slaked their thirst of mind ; with the result that what they borrow from our books sets you comparing us with them. Hence, I opine, some have driven out philosophy — the Thebans I mean, the Spartans and Argives. In 3 rivalry with our authors, and being men with a passion (as I said) for vainglory and eloquence and nothing else,—whatever they stumbled on in the sacred digests they took it, they recast it to match the plan of their fancy, turned it to their own purposes. They had not enough belief in these passages being divine to abstain from interpolation, nor enough intelligence of what at that time<sup>a</sup> was still rather cloudy,—full of darkness, even for the Jews themselves, whose own the scriptures seemed to be. For wherever there was the simplicity of truth, there all 4 the more, in its scorn for faith, human fastidiousness made changes ; and as a result they involved in uncertainty what they had found definite.

They found God there ; that was all ; but they 5 would not speak of Him as they found Him ; so they must discuss His quality, His nature, His abode. Some are sure He is incorporeal, others that He has 6 a body—the Platonists, that is, and the Stoics. Others say He consists of atoms, others of numbers, as do Epicurus and the Pythagoreans. Another says, of fire,—the view of Heraclitus. The Plato-

## TERTULLIAN

quidem curantem rerum, contra Epicurei otiosum et inexercitum, et ut ita dixerim, neminem humanis  
7 rebus ; positum vero extra mundum Stoici, qui figuli  
modo extrinsecus torqueat molem hanc ; intra mun-  
dum Platonici, qui gubernatoris exemplo intra id  
8 maneat quod regat. Sic et de ipso mundo natus  
innatusve sit, decessurus mansurusve sit, variant.  
Sic et de animae statu, quam alii divinam et aeternam,  
alii dissolubilem contendunt, ut quis sensit, ita et  
intulit aut reformavit.

- 9 Nec mirum, si vetus instrumentum ingenia philo-  
sophorum interverterunt. Ex horum semine etiam  
nostram hanc novitiolam paraturam viri quidam suis  
opinionibus ad philosophicas sententias adultera-  
verunt et de una via obliquos multos et inexplicabiles  
tramites sciderunt. Quod ideo suggesserim, ne cui  
nota varietas sectae huius in hoc quoque nos philo-  
sophis adaequare videatur et ex varietate defensio-  
10 num iudicet veritatem. Expedite autem praescri-  
bimus adulteris nostris illam esse regulam veritatis  
quae veniat a Christo transmissa per comites ipsius,  
quibus aliquanto posteriores diversi isti commenta-  
tores probabuntur.
- 11 Omnia adversus veritatem de ipsa veritate con-  
structa sunt, operantibus aemulationem istam spiriti-  
bus erroris. Ab his adulteria huiusmodi salutaris  
disciplinae subornata, ab his quaedam etiam fabulae  
inmissae quae de similitudine fidem infirmarent  
veritatis vel eam sibi potius evincerent, ut quis ideo

---

<sup>a</sup> The Old Testament.

<sup>b</sup> An interesting phrase, the New Testament. He thinks of heretics.

nists represent Him as taking care of the world ; on the other hand the Epicureans picture Him as idle and unemployed, a nobody (so to say) as regards human affairs. The Stoics set Him outside the world, 7 like a potter to whirl this fabric round from outside ; the Platonists put Him inside the world, like a pilot, to stay inside of what He guides. So too about the 8 universe—they do not agree whether it is born or unborn, to depart or to remain. So too about the status of the soul, which some will have to be divine and eternal, and some subject to dissolution. Every man, as he felt, interpolated or remodelled.

But it is nothing surprising if the older literature<sup>a</sup> 9 is misused by these clever philosophers. Some men of their breed have corrupted this more modern literature of ours<sup>b</sup> with opinions of their own to match the views of the philosophers ; and from the one way have hacked out many tracks crooked and involved. I would put this forward lest the known variety within our school should seem to any man to set us on a level with the philosophers, and from the variety of defence made he should condemn the Truth. But 10 we at once lodge a demurrer against our falsifiers that that is the rule of Truth, which comes from Christ, transmitted through his companions. These various inventors of doctrines will be proved to be of a later date.

Everything against the Truth is built up from the 11 Truth, and it is the spirits of error that produce this rivalry. It is they who have produced these falsifications of wholesome doctrine ; they who have launched the fables, which by their resemblance weaken the credibility of Truth or rather capture belief for themselves. So a man may think the Christians

## TERTULLIAN

non putet Christianis credendum quia nec poëtis nec philosophis, vel ideo magis poëtis et philosophis existimet credendum quia non Christianis.

- 12 Itaque ridemur praedicantes deum iudicaturum. Sic enim et poëtae et philosophi tribunal apud inferos ponunt. Et gehennam si comminemur, quae est ignis arcani subterraneam ad poenam thesaurus, proinde decachinnamur. Sic enim et Pyriphlegethon  
13 apud mortuos amnis est. Et si paradisum nominemus, locum divinae amoenitatis recipiendis sanctorum spiritibus destinatum, maceria quadam igneae illius zonae a notitia orbis communis segregatum, Elysii campi fidem occupaverunt. Unde haec, oro vos, philosophis aut poëtis tam consimilia? Nonnisi de  
14 nostris sacramentis. Si de nostris sacramentis, ut de prioribus, ergo fideliora sunt nostra magisque credenda quorum imagines quoque fidem inveniunt. Si de suis sensibus, iam ergo sacramenta nostra imagines posteriorum habebuntur, quod rerum forma non sustinet. Nunquam enim corpus umbra aut veritatem imago praecedit.

- 1 XLVIII. Age iam, si qui philosophus adfirmet, ut ait Laberius de sententia Pythagorae, hominem fieri ex mulo, colubram ex muliere, et in eam opinionem omnia argumenta eloqui virtute distorserit, nonne consensum movebit et fidem infiget etiam ab animalibus abstinendi propterea? Persuasum quis habeat,

---

\* He seems to be the comic poet, Caesar's contemporary and critic.

unworthy of belief because the poets and philosophers are unworthy of it ; or he may think that poets and philosophers deserve the more belief because they are not Christians.

So comes it that we are laughed at for proclaiming 12 that God will be judge. For just so the poets and philosophers set up a tribunal in the world below. And if we raise the threat of Gehenna, which is a treasury of hidden fire for punishment underground, in just the same way we meet with utter derision. For just so Pyriphlegethon is a river among the dead. And if we name Paradise, a place of divine beauty, 13 reserved for the reception of the spirits of the holy, kept from the knowledge of this common world by the fiery zone as it were by a wall,—the Elysian fields are before us in capturing belief. Now whence, I ask you, do the philosophers and poets find things so similar ? Whence, indeed, unless it be from our mysteries ? And if from our mysteries, which are 14 the older, then ours are truer and more credible when the mere copies of them win credence. If they invented these things out of their own feelings, then our mysteries must be counted copies of what came later—a thing contrary to nature. For the shadow never exists before the body, nor the copy before the truth.

XLVIII. Come, suppose some philosopher affirm 1 (like Laberius <sup>a</sup> talking of Pythagoreanism) that a mule becomes a man, and a woman a snake ; suppose that by force of eloquence he twists all the arguments to support that opinion ; it will find (won't it ?) acceptance, it will implant the conviction that we must on that account abstain from eating animals. The persuasion (is it ?) that a man must be careful

## TERTULLIAN

ne forte bubulam de aliquo proavo suo obsonet ? At enim Christianus si de homine hominem ipsumque de Gaio Gaium reducem repromittat, lapidibus magis, nec saltim coetibus<sup>1</sup> a populo exigetur.

- 2 Si quaecunque ratio praeest animarum humanarum reciprocandarum<sup>2</sup> in corpora, cur non in eandem substantiam redeant, cum hoc sit resūtui, id esse quod fuerat ? Iam non ipsae sunt quae fuerant, quia non potuerunt esse quod non erant, nisi desinant  
3 esse quod fuerant. Multis etiam locis<sup>3</sup> ex otio opus erit, si velimus ad hanc partem lascivire, quis in quam bestiam reformari videretur. Sed de nostra magis defensione, qui proponimus multo utique dignius credi hominem ex homine rediturum, quemlibet pro quolibet, dum hominem, ut eadem qualitas animae in eandem restauraretur conditionem, etsi  
4 non effigiem. Certe quia ratio restitutionis destinatio

<sup>1</sup> *All sorts of variants and conjectures ; nothing convincing ; caedibus, caestibus, copiis, calcibus. But Tertullian (as Kellner points out) has thought of the stage ; so Waltzing's conjecture clamoribus may be right. But I prefer to leave the reader to fill the gap.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Fuldensis reads at this point : Quasi non, quaecumque ratio praeest animarum humanarum in corpora reciprocandarum, ipsa exigit illas in eadem corpora revocari ; quia hoc sit revocari id est esse quod fuerant. Nam si non id sunt quod fuerunt, id est humanum et id ipsum corpus indutae, iam non ipsae erunt quae fuerant. Porro quae iam non erunt ipsae, quomodo redisse dicentur ? Aut aliud factae non erunt ipsae, aut manentes ipsae non erunt aliunde. Multis, etc. Whoever is responsible for the Fuldensis, Tertullian or a reviser, its text here must be simply an attempt to make the other version more intelligible. The form in the text can hardly be the later, an adaptation ; and it is certainly not beyond*



## APOLOGETICUS, XLVIII. 1-4

not to be eating a bit of his great-grandfather in his beef? But supposing a Christian assures you that from a man a man comes, and from Gaius it is Gaius himself that returns,—won't the people drive him out with stones rather, and not with . . .

If there is any reason to suppose the return of souls <sup>2</sup> into bodies, why should they not return into the same substance, when restoration means that a thing is what before it had been? But they are not now what they were,—because they could not become what they were not before, unless they ceased to be what they had been. Much reference to books would be needed, and leisure, if we wished to play with the <sup>3</sup> fancy as to the various beasts into which various people might seem to be re-made. But rather, to stick to our defence, it is our proposition that it is altogether more worthy of belief that what was a man will come back a man—any given person from any given person—human at all events—so that the same quality of soul should be restored to the same condition, if not also to the same likeness. Certainly, since the <sup>4</sup> reason for restoration is preparation for judgement,

*Tertullian's occasional fancy for intricate antithesis. The variant may be rendered: "As if the reason, whatever it is, that justifies the return of souls into bodies, does not require that the souls should be recalled to the same bodies! Because to be recalled means to be what they were before. But if they are not what they were before, that is, clad with a human body, and the same body, the souls will not be what they were before. Then, if they are not what they were before, how shall they be said to have returned? Either they will have been made something different and will not be the same, or they will remain the same and will not re-appear from other bodies."*

<sup>3</sup> iocis is an emendation here which Kellner adopts—"many a jest would be needed." Perhaps iocis means passages from writers.

## TERTULLIAN

iudicii est, necessario idem ipse qui fuerat exhibebitur, ut boni seu contrarii meriti iudicium a deo referat. Ideoque repraesentabuntur et corpora, quia neque pati quicquam potest anima sola sine materia stabili, id est carne, et quod omnino de iudicio dei pati debent animae, non sine carne meruerunt intra quam omnia egerunt.

5 Sed quomodo, inquis, dissoluta materia exhiberi potest? Considera temetipsum, o homo, et fidem rei invenies. Recogita quid fueris antequam esses. Utique nihil. Meminisses enim, si quid fuisses. Qui ergo nihil fueras priusquam esses, idem nihil factus cum esse desieris, cur non possis rursus esse de nihilo eiusdem ipsius auctoris voluntate qui te voluit esse de  
6 nihilo? Quid novi tibi eveniet? Qui non eras, factus es; cum iterum non eris, fies. Redde si potes rationem qua factus es, et tunc require qua fies. Et tamen facilius utique fies quod fuisti aliquando, quia aequae non difficile factus es quod nunquam fuisti aliquando.

7 Dubitabitur, credo, de dei viribus, qui tantum corpus hoc mundi de eo quod non fuerat non minus quam de morte vacationis et inanitatis inposuit, animatum spiritu omnium animarum animatore, signatum et ipsum humanae resurrectionis exemplum  
8 in testimonium vobis. Lux cotidie interfecta re-

it must necessarily be the very same man, who once was, that will be produced, so as to receive judgement from God upon the good he has done or the opposite. Accordingly their bodies, too, will be re-fashioned, because the soul by itself alone cannot suffer anything without some solid matter, that is the flesh; and because, whatever souls deserve in the judgement of God to suffer, they did not earn it without the flesh, clothed with which they committed all their acts.

“ But how,” you say, “ how can the material of the 5 body, once distributed, be visibly produced ? ” Think of yourself, sir, and you will find assurance of it. Reflect what you were, before you were *you*. Nothing at all, wasn’t it ? For you would remember, if you had existed. You were nothing before you came into being; you become nothing when you have ceased to be; why could you not again come out of nothing into being, by the will of the very same Author whose will brought you into being out of nothing ? What will be new about it in your experi- 6 ence ? You were not; you were made; and once again when you are not, you will be made. Give, if you can, an account of how you were made, and then ask how you will be made. And yet, I would think, it will be easier for you to be made what you once were, because, with no difficulty at all, you were just as much made what once you were not.

Your doubts, I suppose, will be about the power 7 of God ? of God, who set together the mighty frame of this universe out of what was not, as if out of the deadness of emptiness and chaos, who gave it the breath of life by that spirit, which gives life to all lives (souls), who sealed it to be itself a testimony for you, a type of human resurrection. Day by day 8

## TERTULLIAN

splendet et tenebrae pari vice decedendo succedunt, sidera defuncta vivescunt, tempora ubi finiuntur incipiunt, fructus consummantur et redeunt, certe semina non nisi corrupta et dissoluta fecundius surgunt, omnia pereundo servantur, omnia de interitu  
9 reformantur. Tu homo, tantum nomen, si intellegas te vel de titulo Pythiae discens, dominus omnium morientium et resurgentium, ad hoc morieris, ut pereas? Ubicumque resolutus fueris, quaecunque te materia destruxerit, hauserit, aboleverit, in nihilum prodegerit, reddet te. Eius est nihilum ipsum cuius et totum.

- 10 Ergo, inquitis, semper moriendum erit et semper resurgendum? Si ita rerum dominus destinasset, ingratis experireris conditionis tuae legem. At nunc  
11 non aliter destinavit quam praedicavit. Quae ratio universitatem ex diversitate composuit, ut omnia aemulis substantiis sub unitate constarent ex vacuo et solido, ex animali et inanimali, ex comprehensibili et incomprehensibili, ex luce et tenebris, ex ipsa vita et morte: eadem aevum quoque ita destinata et distincta condicione conseruit, ut prima haec pars, ab exordio rerum quam incolimus, temporali aetate ad finem defluat, sequens vero, quam expectamus, in infinitam aeternitatem propagetur.
- 12 Cum ergo finis et limes, medius qui interhiat, adfuerit, ut etiam ipsius mundi species transferatur aequae temporalis, quae illi dispositioni aeternitatis

---

<sup>a</sup> The assonance in the Latin seems beyond us.

<sup>b</sup> Oehler and others take this to be the millennial interval. Not necessarily.

light is slain and shines once more ; darkness in due turn departs and follows on again ; and the dead stars come to life ; seasons, when they end, begin anew ; crops are matured and return ; assuredly the seed must be wasted and dissolved to grow more fruitfully ; everything is saved by being lost ; everything is re-fashioned out of death. You, O man! (mighty 9 name !) if you understand yourself (if you will “ learn yourself,” as the inscription of the Delphic priestess bids), will you, the lord of all things that die and rise again, will *you* die to perish utterly ? Wherever you have been dissolved,—whatever material body shall have destroyed you, consumed you, abolished you, reduced you to nothing, it shall restore you. To Him belongs that very *nothing*, Whose is the whole.

“ Then,” do you say ? “ will it always be dying 10 and rising again ? ” If the Lord of all things had so determined you would have perforce to submit to the law that governed your being. But, as it is, He has so determined, as He has proclaimed to us. His Reason made this universe of things diverse,<sup>a</sup> that 11 all things should consist of a unity made of rival natures, such as void and solid, animate and inanimate, tangible and intangible, light and darkness, yes ! of life and death, too. The same Reason made a unity of Time also, mapping out and distinguishing the terms of its course, so that this first part of it from the beginning of the world, the part of our habitation, should flow on age by age to an end, but the later part of it, to which we look forward, should stretch out to an endless eternity.

When, then, the end, that border-line that gapes 12 between,<sup>b</sup> shall have come, and the fashion of the universe itself, temporal as all other things, hung

## TERTULLIAN

- aulaei vice oppansa est, tunc restituetur omne humanum genus ad expungendum quod in isto aevo boni seu mali meruit, et exinde pendendum in immensam  
13 aeternitatis perpetuitatem. Ideoque nec mors iam, nec rursus ac rursus resurrectio, sed erimus idem qui nunc, nec alii post, dei quidem cultores apud deum semper, superinduti substantia propria aeternitatis : profani vero, et qui non integre ad deum, in poena aeque iugis ignis, habentes ex ipsa natura eius divinam scilicet subministrationem incorruptibilitatis.
- 14 Noverunt et philosophi diversitatem arcani et publici ignis. Ita longe alius est qui usui humano, alius qui iudicio dei apparet, sive de caelo fulmina stringens, sive de terra per vertices montium eructans ; non enim absumit quod exurit, sed dum erogatur, re-  
15 paratur. Adeo manent montes semper ardentes, et qui de caelo tangitur, salvus est, ut nullo iam igni decinerescat. Et hoc erit testimonium ignis aeterni, hoc exemplum iugis iudicii poenam nutrientis. Montes uruntur et durant. Quid nocentes et dei hostes ?
- 1 XLIX. Hae sunt quae in nobis solis praesumptiones vocantur, in philosophis et poetis summae scientiae et insignia ingenia. Illi prudentes, nos inepti ; illi honorandi, nos inridendi, immo eo amplius et puni-  
2 endi. Falsa nunc sint quae tuentur et merito praesumptio, attamen necessaria ; inepta, attamen utilia ;

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. v. 2 ; the word *superinduti* survives in the Vulgate.

<sup>b</sup> A fancy about persons struck by lightning.

like a curtain before that eternal dispensation, shall pass away, then shall all mankind be restored, for the determination of what good or evil it has done in this age, and for its requital, in strict accord, throughout the boundless continuance of eternity. So it 13 is not death now, and then resurrection after resurrection. We shall be the same persons that now we are, and not others in succession,—the worshippers of God, we shall ever be with God, clothed upon <sup>a</sup> with the nature proper to eternity ; but the profane, and those who are not right with God, shall be punished with fire as lasting, and from its nature they too, as God ordains, shall derive incorruptibility.

The philosophers know the distinction between 14 mysterious and common fire. The fire that serves man's use is one thing ; the fire that ministers to the judgement of God is another, whether flashing the thunder-bolts from heaven, or rushing up from the earth through the mountain-tops. For it does not consume what it burns, but, even while it spends it, repairs the loss. So the mountains remain, ever 15 burning ; and he who is touched by fire from heaven, is safe—no fire shall turn him to ashes.<sup>b</sup> Take this as evidence for fire eternal, this as a type of endless judgement with punishment ever renewing. The mountains burn and endure. What of the guilty, what of God's enemies ?

XLIX. All this you call presumption in our case, but 1 only in our case ; in the case of philosophers and poets it is supreme knowledge, it is unique genius ! They are wise, we are silly ; honour is their due ; mockery is ours, yes, and punishment into the bargain. But 2 now suppose what protects us to be false, and really presumption ; still it is necessary : silly—but useful !

## TERTULLIAN

- siquidem meliores fieri coguntur qui eis credunt, metu aeterni supplicii et spe aeterni refrigerii. Itaque non expedit falsa dici nec inepta haberi quae expedit vera praesumi. Nullo titulo damnari licet omnino  
3 quae prosunt. In vobis itaque praesumptio est haec ipsa quae damnat utilia. Proinde neque inepta esse possunt ; certe etsi falsa et inepta, nulli tamen noxia. Nam et multis aliis similia quibus nullas poenas inrogatis, vanis et fabulosis, inaccusatis et inpunitis,  
4 ut innoxiiis. Sed in eiusmodi enim, si utique, inrisui iudicandum est, non gladiis et ignibus et crucibus et bestiis, de qua iniquitate saevitiae non modo caecum hoc vulgus exsultat et insultat, sed et quidam vestrum, quibus favor vulgi de iniquitate captatur, gloriantur.
- 5 Quasi non totum quod in nos potestis nostrum sit arbitrium. Certe, si velim, Christianus sum. Tunc ergo me damnabis, si damnari velim ; cum vero quod in me potes, nisi velim, non potes, iam meae voluntatis est quod potes, non tuae potestatis. Proinde et  
6 vulgus vane de nostra vexatione gaudet. Proinde enim nostrum est gaudium, quod sibi vindicat, qui malumus damnari quam a deo excidere : contra illi, qui nos oderunt, dolere, non gaudere debebant, consecutis nobis quod elegimus.
- 1 L. Ergo, inquitis, cur querimini quod vos insequamur, si pati vultis, cum diligere debeatis per quos patimini quod vultis ? Plane volumus pati,



since those who believe in it are driven to be better men, by fear of eternal punishment, by hope of eternal refreshment. So it is in no one's interest that tenets should be called false or judged silly, which it is in the interests of all to be presumed true. What is beneficial cannot be condemned on any grounds. It is with you that the presumption lies, in condemning 3 what is useful. In the same way, neither can these tenets be silly. At all events, even if they are false and silly, they are harmful to no one. For they are just like many other tenets on which you lay no penalties, vain tenets, sheer fable, but exempt from accusation and punishment, because harmless. In error of this 4 sort, if there is to be sentence passed, the fit sentence is laughter—not sword and fire, not cross and beast ! And it is in savagery and injustice of that sort that this blind rabble exults and triumphs over us—and not they alone, but some among you, who make use of this injustice to win the favour of the rabble, boast of it.

As if all your power against us were not in our 5 control ! I am a Christian certainly,—but if I wish to be. Then only can you condemn me, if I wish to be condemned. When then your power against me is, unless I so will, no power at all, your power depends on my will, not on power in you. Similarly the joy of 6 the rabble in our persecution is not a real joy ; the joy they count theirs, is ours, who prefer to be condemned rather than to fall from God. On the other hand those who hate us ought to be sorry, not glad, when we have achieved what we have chosen.

L. "Then," you say, "why complain that we perse- 1 cute you, if you wish to suffer ? You ought to love those who secure that you suffer what you wish !" Certainly

## TERTULLIAN

verum eo more, quo et bellum miles. Nemo quidem libens patitur, cum et trepidare et periclitari sit  
2 necesse. Tamen et proeliatur omnibus viribus, et vincens in proelio gaudet qui de proelio querebatur, quia et gloriam consequitur et praedam. Proelium est nobis quod provocamur ad tribunalia, ut illic sub discrimine capitis pro veritate certemus. Victoria est autem pro quo certaveris obtinere. Ea victoria habet et gloriam placendi deo et praedam vivendi in aeternum.

3 Sed obducimur. Certe cum obtinuimus. Ergo vicimus, cum occidimur, denique evadimus, cum obducimur. Licet nunc sarmenticios et semaxios appelletis, quia ad stipitem dimidii axis revincti sarmentorum ambitu exurimur. Hic est habitus victoriae nostrae, haec palmata vestis, tali curru  
4 triumphamus. Merito itaque victis non placemus; propterea enim desperati et perditii existimamur. Sed haec desperatio et perditio penes vos in causa gloriae et famae vexillum virtutis extollunt.

5 Mucius dexteram suam libens in ara reliquit: o sublimitas animi! Empedocles totum sese Catanensium Aetnaeis incendiis donavit: o vigor mentis! Aliqua Carthaginis conditrix rogo se secundum matri-  
6 monium dedit: o praeconium castitatis! Regulus, ne unus pro multis hostibus viveret, toto corpore cruces patitur: o virum fortem et in captivitate

---

<sup>a</sup> For these ornaments of a Roman triumph see Livy, x. 7; xxx. 15; the *palmata tunica* is in both passages.

<sup>b</sup> For Mucius cf. p. 428 note a, and for Regulus p. 392 note b.

<sup>c</sup> The text may be wrong in these two places, or perhaps the translation; but the general drift is clear enough.

## APOLOGETICUS, L. 1-6

we wish to suffer ; but it is exactly the case of the soldier and war. Nobody is glad to face it with all its inevitable anxiety and danger. Yet he battles with 2 all his might and, victorious in the battle, he rejoices, —though but now he was grumbling about the battle —because he achieves glory and spoil. Our battle consists in being challenged to face the tribunals ; that there, in <sup>peril</sup> of life, we may fight it out for truth. Victory is the achievement of the thing for which you have fought. Our victory means the glory of pleasing God, and the spoils are eternal life.

But we are condemned. Yes, when we have 3 achieved our purpose. So we have conquered, when we are killed ; we escape when we are condemned. So you may now call us “ faggot-fellows ” and “ half-axle-men,” because we are tied to a half-axle-post, the faggots are piled round us, and we are burnt. This is our garb of victory, the robe embroidered with the palm ; this our triumphal chariot.<sup>a</sup> It is 4 right and reasonable that we do not please the conquered ; that is why we pass for desperate fellows, a forlorn hope. But desperation and recklessness of this sort, when it is on your side, when glory and renown are at stake,—oh ! then it is holding high the standard of courage.

Mucius <sup>b</sup> gladly left his right hand upon the altar ; 5 O the sublimity of that spirit ! Empedocles gave the whole of himself to the flames of Etna, at Catana ; O the strength of that mind ! There was a foundress of Carthage who gave herself to the funeral pyre in wedlock <sup>c</sup> ; O the glory of that chastity ! Regulus <sup>b</sup> 6 refused to have his own single life spared in exchange for many of the enemy and suffered torture all over his body <sup>c</sup> ; O heroic soul, a prisoner but a conqueror !

## TERTULLIAN

- victorem ! Anaxarchus, cum in exitum tisanæ pilo contunderetur : Tunde, tunde, aiebat, Anaxarchi follem, Anaxarchum enim non tundis : o philosophi magnanimitatem, qui de tali exitu suo etiam iocabatur ! Omitto eos qui cum gladio proprio vel alio genere mortis mitiore de laude pepigerunt. Ecce enim et tormentorum certamina coronantur a vobis.
- 8 Attica meretrix carnifice iam fatigato postremo linguam suam comesam in faciem tyranni saevientis expuit, ut expueret et vocem, ne coniuratos confiteri posset, si etiam victa voluisset. Zeno Eleates consultus a Dionysio, quidnam philosophia praestaret, cum respondisset contemptum mortis, impassibilis flagellis tyranni obiectus sententiam suam ad mortem usque signabat. Certe Laconum flagella sub oculis etiam hortantium propinquorum acerbata tantum honorem tolerantiae domui conferunt quantum sanguinis fuderint.
- 10 O gloriam licitam, quia humanam, cui nec praesumptio perdita nec persuasio desperata reputatur in contemptu mortis et atrocitatis omnimodae, cui tantum pro patria, pro imperio, pro amicitia pati
- 11 permissum est quantum pro deo non licet ! Et tamen illis omnibus et statuas defunditis, et imagines inscribitis, et titulos inciditis in aeternitatem. Quantum de monumentis potestis scilicet, praestatis et

<sup>a</sup> See Diogenes Laertius, ix. 59 *ἐκέλευο δὴ τὸ περιφερόμενον, "πίσσε τὸν Ἀναξάρχου θύλακον, Ἀνάξαρχον δὲ οὐ πίτσεις."*

<sup>b</sup> *Certamina* suggests the various contests at the Games.

<sup>c</sup> Cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxxiv. 72 (12) and vii. 23, 87; the occasion was the conspiracy of Harmodius and Aristogiton.

<sup>d</sup> Other ancient writers assign this experiment to other tyrants.

<sup>e</sup> On the lashing of boys at the altar of Artemis Orthia

## APOLOGETICUS, L. 6-11

Anaxarchus, when they pounded him like barley groats with a pestle, "Pound away!" he cried, "pound away! it is Anaxarchus's outside case you are pounding, not Anaxarchus!"<sup>a</sup> O the splendid spirit of the philosopher, jesting about his own death, and such a death! I pass over those who with their own swords, or some 7 milder form of death, have bargained for praise. For look! contests<sup>b</sup> in torture win crowns from you. The 8 Attic harlot, when the torturer was tired out, at last chewed off her own tongue and spat it in the face of the raging tyrant—so to say, to spit out her voice, so that she could not now betray the conspirators, even if overcome by pain she had wished to do it.<sup>c</sup> Zeno of Elea, when Dionysius<sup>d</sup> asked him what philosophy 9 gave a man and he answered "contempt for death," was subjected to the lashes of the tyrant and proved his dogma by dying impassive. Assuredly the lashes of the Spartans, laid on with utmost cruelty under the eyes of a boy's kinsfolk, who cheer as they watch, win for his house the fame of endurance in exact ratio to the blood shed.<sup>e</sup>

O that indeed is glory, lawful glory because 10 human! There no reckless presumption, no desperate delusion, is to be thought of, in that contempt for death and for every cruelty! No, there it is permissible to suffer for one's country, for the empire, for friendship, what it is not permitted to suffer—for God! And yet for every man of them you cast a 11 statue, you paint a picture, you carve an inscription, to give them immortality. So far as you can manage it with monuments, you yourselves give at Sparta see Pausanias, iii. 16. 10. Cicero records (*Tuscul. Disput.* ii. 14. 34) that it was said some lads had died without a sound under the scourge at the altar.

## TERTULLIAN

ipsi quodammodo mortuis resurrectionem. Hanc qui veram a deo sperat, si pro deo patiatur, insanus est.

- 12 Sed hoc agite, boni praesides, meliores multo apud populum si illis Christianos immolaveritis, cruciate, torquete, damnate, atterite nos : probatio est enim innocentiae nostrae iniquitas vestra. Ideo nos haec pati deus patitur. Nam et proxime ad leonem damnando Christianam potius quam ad leonem confessi estis labem pudicitiae apud nos atrocior omnem poena et omni morte reputari. Nec quicquam tamen proficit exquisitior quaeque crudelitas vestra ; inlecebra est magis sectae. Plures efficimur quotiens metimur a vobis ; semen est sanguis Christianorum.
- 14 Multi apud vos ad tolerantiam doloris et mortis hortantur ut Cicero in Tusculanis, ut Seneca in Fortuitis, ut Diogenes, ut Pyrrhon, ut Callinicus. Nec tamen tantos inveniunt verba discipulos quantos
- 15 Christiani factis docendo. Illa ipsa obstinatio, quam exprobratis, magistra est. Quis enim non contemperatione eius concutitur ad requirendum quid intus in re sit ? quis non, ubi requisivit, accedit ? ubi accessit, pati exoptat, ut totam dei gratiam redimat, ut omnem veniam ab eo compensatione sanguinis sui
- 16 expediat ? Omnia enim huic operi delicta donantur. Inde est, quod ibidem sentiis vestris gratias agimus. Ut est aemulatio divinae rei et humanae, cum damnamur a vobis, a deo absolvimur.

---

<sup>a</sup> As one reads Tertullian, one feels more and more clearly that these last three sections tell his own story. Fourteen years later his last words to Scapula (*Ad Scapulam*, 5) are in the same tenor : " Quisque enim tantam tolerantiam spectans, ut aliquo scrupulo percussus, et inquirere accenditur quid sit<sup>a</sup> in causa, et ubi cognoverit veritatem et ipse statim

## APOLOGETICUS, L. 11-16

dead men a sort of resurrection. But the man who hopes for a real resurrection from God, if he suffers for God—he is a mere fool!

But go to it! my good magistrates; the populace 12 will count you a deal better, if you sacrifice the Christians to them. Torture us, rack us, condemn us, crush us; your cruelty only proves our innocence. That is why God suffers us to suffer all this. Yes, but lately, when you condemned a Christian girl to the pander rather than the panther, you admitted that we count an injury to our chastity more awful than any penalty, than any death. But nothing what- 13 ever is accomplished by your cruelties, each more exquisite than the last. It is the bait that wins men for our school. We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed. Many 14 among you preach the endurance of pain and of death—such as Cicero in his *Tusculans*, Seneca in his *Fortuita*, Diogenes, Pyrrho, Callinicus. And yet their words never find so many disciples as the Christians win, who teach by deeds. That very “obstinacy” 15 with which you taunt us, is your teacher. For who that beholds it is not stirred to inquire, what lies indeed within it? Who, on inquiry, does not join us, and joining us, does not wish to suffer, that he may purchase for himself the whole grace of God, that he may win full pardon from God by paying his own blood for it? For all sins are forgiven to a deed like this. That 16 is why, on being sentenced by you, on the instant we render you thanks. There is a rivalry between God’s ways and man’s; we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by God.<sup>a</sup>

sequitur.” Cf. *Scorpiace*, 8 “nemo voluisset occidi nisi compos veritatis.”





DE SPECTACULIS

## DE SPECTACULIS

I. Qui status fidei, quae ratio veritatis, quod praescriptum disciplinae inter cetera saecularium errorum etiam spectaculorum voluptates adimat, dei servi, cognoscite, qui cum maxime ad deum acceditis, recognoscite, qui iam accessisse vos testificati et confessi estis, ne aut ignorando aut dissimulando quis peccet. Tanta est enim voluptatum vis, ut et ignorantiam protelet in occasionem et conscientiam corrumpat in dissimulationem. Ad utrumque adhuc forsitan alicui opiniones ethnicorum blandiantur, qui in ista causa adversus nos ita argumentari consuerunt: nihil obstrepere religioni in animo et in conscientia tanta solacia extrinsecus oculorum vel aurium nec vero deum offendi oblectatione hominis, qua salvo erga deum metu et honore suo in tempore et suo in loco frui scelus non sit. Atquin hoc cum maxime [89<sup>v</sup>] paramus demonstrare, quemadmodum ista non competant verae religioni et vero obsequio erga verum deum. Sunt qui existimant Christianos, ex-

## DE SPECTACULIS

I. The conditions of faith, the reason inherent in truth, the law of our discipline, which, along with all the other errors of the world, takes from us also the pleasures of the public shows,—what these are I would have you learn, O servants of God, you who are even now making your approach to God ; and you too I would have rethink it all, who have witnessed and borne your testimony that you have already made that approach ; lest by ignorance, real or pretended, any of you fall into sin. For such is the force of pleasure that it can prolong ignorance to give it its chance, and pervert knowledge to cloak itself. In addition to both these things, it may be that the opinions of the heathen have, to this day, an appeal for some. For in this matter they commonly take this line of argument against us ; as that there can be no clash between religion, in your mind and conscience, and these great refreshments of eye and ear that lie outside us ; that God is not offended by a man's enjoying himself, but that, so long as his fear of God and God's honour are unhurt, it is no guilt in its proper time and place to avail oneself of such enjoyment. But it is exactly this which here and now we purpose to prove—that this does not square with true religion or with duty toward God. There are those who think that

## TERTULLIAN

peditum morti genus, ad hanc obstinationem abdicatione voluptatum erudiri, quo facilius vitam contemnant amputatis quasi retinaculis eius nec desiderent, quam iam supervacuam sibi fecerunt, ut hoc consilio potius et humano prospectu, non divino praescripto definitum existimetur. Pigebat scilicet etiam perseverantes tantis in voluptatibus propter dominum mori. Quamquam, etsi ita esset, tam apto consilio tantum obstinatio disciplinae debebat obsequium.

II. Iam vero nemo est, qui non hoc quoque praetendat: omnia a deo instituta et homini attributa, sicut praedicamus, et utique bona, ut omnia boni auctoris; inter haec deputari universa ista, ex quibus spectacula instruuntur, equum verbi gratia et leonem et vires corporis et vocis suavitates; igitur neque alienum videri posse neque inimicum deo, quod de conditione constet ipsius, neque cultoribus dei deputandum, quod ei non sit inimicum, quia nec alienum. Plane et ipsae extructiones locorum, quod saxa, quod caementa, quod marmora, quod columnae dei res sunt, qui ea ad instrumentum terrae dedit; sed et ipsi actus sub caelo dei transiguntur.

Quam sapiens argumentatrix sibi videtur ignorantia humana, praesertim, cum aliquid eiusmodi de gaudiis et de fructibus saeculi metuit amittere. Plures

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Apology*, 50. 15; Marcus Aurelius xi. 3 *μὴ κατὰ ψιλὴν παράταξιν ὥς οἱ Χριστιανοί* (to argue that the last three words are "ungrammatical and pretty certainly a gloss" appears to me to be quite uncritical). Cf. also Pliny to Trajan, x. 93. 3 "pertinaciam certe et inflexibilem obstinationem" of the Christians.

## DE SPECTACULIS, I.—II.

Christians, a race of men ever ready for death, are trained in that stubbornness<sup>a</sup> of theirs by the renunciation of pleasures, that they may find it easier to despise life, when once its ties (if the word be allowed) are severed, and they no longer crave what they have emptied of meaning for themselves. This would make it a rule of human prudence and forethought rather than of divine command. It would forsooth go against the grain to die for the Lord, if such pleasures could still have continued! Though, to be sure, if it were so, stubbornness in a rule of life such as ours might well pay attention to a plan so apt.

II. In the next place, there is no one who fails to produce this excuse—that all things were created by God and given to man (as we Christians teach), and that they are really all good, all being the work of a good Creator; and that among them we must reckon all the various things that go to make the public shows, the horse, for example, and the lion, and strength of body and charm of voice. It follows, they urge, that a thing cannot be counted foreign to God or hostile to Him that exists by His creation, nor must we suppose a thing hostile to God's worshippers, which is not hostile to God because it is not foreign to God. Obviously the structures of the places,—the stones, cement, marbles, columns,—are all God's own, who gave all those things to furnish the earth; yes, and the performances themselves are carried through under God's heaven.

How clever in argument human ignorance seems to itself! especially when it is afraid of losing something of this kind, some delight or enjoyment of the world!

## TERTULLIAN

denique invenias, quos magis periculum voluptatis quam vitae avocet ab hac secta. Nam mortem etiam stultus ut debitam non extimescit, voluptatem etiam sapiens ut optatam non contemnit, cum alia non sit et stulto et sapienti vitae gratia nisi voluptas. Nemo negat, quia nemo ignorat, quod ultro natura suggerit, deum esse universitatis conditorem eamque universitatem tam bonam quam homini mancipatam. Sed quia non penitus deum norunt nisi naturali iure, non etiam familiari, de longinquo, non de proximo, necesse est ignorent, qualiter administrari aut iubeat aut prohibeat quae instituit, simul quae vis sit aemula ex adverso adulterandis usibus divinae conditionis, quia neque voluntatem neque adversarium noveris eius quem minus noveris. Non ergo hoc solum respiciendum est, a quo omnia sint instituta, sed a quo conversa. Ita enim apparebit, cui usui sint instituta, si appareat, cui non. Multum interest inter corruptelam et integritatem, quia multum est inter institutorem et interpolatorem.

Ceterum omnes species malorum, quae etiam ethnici ut indubitata et prohibent et defendunt, ex operibus dei constant. Vides homicidium ferro veneno magicis devinctionibus perfici: tam ferrum dei res est quam herbae, quam angeli. Numquid tamen in hominis necem auctor ista providit? Atquin omnem homicidii speciem uno et princi-

---

<sup>a</sup> *Secta*, the common name for a philosophic school, used by Tertullian for the Christian community.

<sup>b</sup> Plants used as poisons, fallen angels called into action by magic.

## DE SPECTACULIS, II.

Why, you will find more men turned from our school <sup>a</sup> by the danger to pleasure than by the danger to life ! For even a fool does not dread death beyond a certain point—he feels it inevitable ; but pleasure, a thing of such high value, even a sage does not despise ; since neither fool nor sage has any delight in life apart from pleasure. No one denies—because nobody is unaware of it and even nature tells it us—that God is the creator of the universe, and that the universe is good and is given to man. But because they do not really know God—knowing Him only by natural law and not by right of sonship—knowing Him from afar and not at close quarters,—they are necessarily ignorant as to how He bids or forbids the things of His creation to be used. They are also unaware of the rival powers that confront God for the abuse of what divine creation has given for use. For where your knowledge of God is defective, you can neither know His mind nor His adversary. We have not then merely to consider by whom all things were created, but also by whom they are perverted. For in that way it will appear for what use they were created, if it once appear for what use they were not. There is great difference between the corrupted and the uncorrupted because there is great difference between the Creator and the perverter.

Yet every form of evil, the evils that the heathen, as well as we, forbid and guard against, comes from something God made. You see murder committed by means of iron, drug, magical incantation : but iron is as much God's creature as the plants or the angels.<sup>b</sup> But did the Creator of them design those things for the destruction of man ? No ! He interdicts every kind of man-

## TERTULLIAN

[90] pali praecepto interimit: "non occides." Proinde aurum aes argentum ebur lignum et quaecumque fabricandis idolis materia captatur quis in saeculo posuit nisi saeculi auctor deus? Numquid tamen, ut haec adversus ipsum adorentur? Atquin summa offensa penes illum idololatria. Quid non dei est quod deum offendit? Sed cum offeredit, dei esse desiit, et cum desiit, offendit. Ipse homo, omnium flagitiorum auctor, non tantum opus dei, verum etiam imago est; et tamen et corpore et spiritu desciiit a suo institutore. Neque enim oculos ad concupiscentiam sumpsimus et linguam ad maliloquium et aures ad exceptaculum maliloqui et gulam ad gulae crimen et ventrem ad gulae societatem et genitalia ad excessus impudicitiae et manus ad vim et gressus ad vagam vitam, aut spiritus ideo insitus corpori, ut insidiarum, ut fraudium, ut iniquitatum cogitatorium fieret. Non opinor. Nam si omnem malignitatem et si etiam malitiam excogitatam deus exactor innocentiae odit, indubitate quaecumque condidit non in exitum operum constat condidisse quae damnat, licet eadem opera per ea quae condidit administrantur, quando haec sit tota ratio damnationis, perversa administratio conditionis a conditis.

Nos igitur, qui domino cognito etiam aemulum eius inspeximus, qui institutore comperto et interpolatorem una deprehendimus, nec mirari neque dubitare [91] oportet: cum ipsum hominem, opus et imaginem dei, totius universitatis possessorem, illa vis interpolatoris et aemulatoris angeli ab initio de integritate deiecerit,

<sup>a</sup> Exod. xx. 13.

<sup>b</sup> *v.l. actor, doer.*



## DE SPECTACULIS, II.

slaying by one summary law: "Thou shalt not kill."<sup>a</sup> Then think of gold, brass, silver, ebony, wood and any other material used for the making of idols—who put them in the world, unless it is God the author of the world? Yet, would you say, He did it that these things may be worshipped against Himself? No! the supreme offence in His eyes is idolatry. What is there that offends God but is God's own? But when it offends God, it has ceased to be His; and when it has ceased to be His, it offends Him. Man himself, author<sup>b</sup> of every kind of guilt, is not only the work of God, but also His likeness; and yet in body and spirit he has fallen away from his Creator. For we did not receive eyes for lust, nor the tongue for evil speech, nor ears to listen to evil speech, nor gullet for the sin of greed, nor belly to be gullet's partner, organs of sex for shameless excess, hands for violence, feet to wander; nor was spirit imparted in body for the planning of treachery, fraud and iniquity. I think not. For if God, who requires of us innocence, hates all malice, yes, and every thought of evil, assuredly it is certain that, whatever He created, He never created to issue in acts which He condemns, even if those acts are performed by means of what He has created. No! for there is no other account to be given of condemnation but that it is the misuse of God's creation by God's creatures.

We, then, in knowing the Lord, have learnt to recognize His rival; in learning the Creator we have detected the perverter too; so we need feel neither surprise nor doubt. Man himself, God's handiwork and image, lord of the whole universe, the violence of that angel, perverter of God's work, God's rival, overthrew in the very beginning, and robbed him

## TERTULLIAN

universam substantiam eius pariter cum ipso integritati institutam pariter cum ipso in perversitatem demutavit adversus institutorem, ut, quam doluerat homini concessam, non sibi, in ea ipsa et hominem reum deo faceret et suam dominationem collocaret.

III. Hac conscientia instructi adversus opinionem ethnicorum convertamur magis ad nostrorum detractatus. Quorundam enim fides aut simplicior aut scrupulosior ad hanc abdicationem spectaculorum de scripturis auctoritatem exposcit et se in incertum constituit, quod non significanter neque nominatim denuntietur servis dei abstinencia eiusmodi. Plane nusquam invenimus, quemadmodum aperte positum est: "non occides, non idolum coles, non adulterium, non fraudem admittes," ita exerte definitum: non ibis in circum, non in theatrum, agonem, munus non spectabis. Sed invenimus ad hanc quoque speciem pertinere illam primam vocem David: "felix vir," inquit, "qui non abiit in concilium impiorum et in via peccatorum non stetit nec in cathedra pestium sedit." Nam etsi iustum illum videtur praedicasse, quod in concilio et in consessu Iudaeorum de necando domino consultantium non communicavit, late tamen semper scriptura divina dividitur, ubicumque secundum praesentis rei sensum etiam disciplina munitur, ut

<sup>a</sup> Or possibly "man's whole nature," but the end of the clause is almost decisive for the rendering in the text.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xx. 13. 4, 14, 15.

<sup>c</sup> Psalm i. 1. Following the Septuagint *ἐπὶ καθέδραν λοιμῶν*, which the Vulgate also follows.

<sup>d</sup> Luke xxiii. 50; Joseph of Arimathea.

## DE SPECTACULIS, II.—III.

of his innocence ; and at the same time he changed the whole material world, his possession,<sup>a</sup> created like man for innocence ; he changed it along with man to be perverted against the Creator ; in his anger that God had given it to man and not to him, his object was to make man in it guilty before God and in it to establish his own power.

III. Furnished with this conviction against heathen opinion, let us turn rather to handle what our own friends put forward. There are certain people, of a faith somewhat simple or somewhat precise, who, when faced with this renunciation of the public shows, ask for the authority of Scripture and take their ground in uncertainty, because abstinence in this matter is not specifically and in so many words enjoined upon the servants of God. No, we certainly nowhere find it enjoined with the same clearness as : "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not worship an idol," "Thou shalt not commit adultery" or "fraud"<sup>b</sup> ; —we nowhere find it expressly laid down : "Thou shalt not go to the circus, thou shalt not go to the theatre, thou shalt not look on at contest or spectacle." But we do find relevant to this type of thing that first word of David : "Happy is the man," he says, "who has not gone to the gathering of the impious, who has not stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilences."<sup>c</sup> For even though he appears to have spoken of that "just man"<sup>d</sup> because he had no part in the gathering and session of the Jews in debate as to killing the Lord, still Divine Scripture may always be broadly applied,<sup>e</sup> wherever, agreeably with the sense of the actual matter in hand, discipline is fortified. So that in

\* Literally "divided," perhaps an echo of 2 Tim. ii. 15.

## TERTULLIAN

[917] hic quoque non sit aliena vox a spectaculorum interdictione. Si enim pauculos tunc Iudaeos impiorum concilium vocavit, quanto magis tantum conventum ethnici populi? Minus impii ethnici, minus peccatores, minus hostes Christi quam tunc Iudaei? Quid quod et cetera congruunt. Nam apud spectacula et in cathedra sedetur et in via statur; vias enim et cardines vocant balteorum per ambitum et discrimina popularium per proclivum; cathedra quoque nominatur ipse in anfractu ad consessum situs. Itaque e contrario "infelix qui in quodcumque concilium impiorum abierit et in quacumque via peccatorum steterit et in quacumque cathedra pestium sederit." Generaliter dictum intellegamus, cum quid<sup>1</sup> aliud, etiam specialiter interpretari capit. Nam et specialiter quaedam pronuntiata generaliter sapiunt. Cum deus Israelitas admonet disciplinae vel obiurgat, utique ad omnes habet; cum Aegypto et Aethiopiae exitium comminatur, utique in omnem gentem peccatricem praeiudicat. Sic omnis gens peccatrix Aegyptus et Aethiopia a specie ad genus, quemadmodum etiam omne spectaculum concilium impiorum a genere ad speciem.

IV. Ne quis argutari nos putet, ad principalem

<sup>1</sup> *Here I have used Oehler's punctuation against Reifferscheid, who puts a stop at intellegamus.*

---

<sup>a</sup> This passage seems to puzzle commentators and translators. We are told, perhaps rightly, that the *cathedra* was the space assigned to matrons. This does not make in

240

## DE SPECTACULIS, III.—IV.

this case too the saying is germane to the prohibition of the public shows. For if then he called a mere handful of Jews "a gathering of the impious," how much this vast assemblage of a heathen people? Are the heathen less impious, less sinners, less the enemies of Christ, than the Jews were then? And how all the rest of it chimes in! For at the public shows there is sitting in the seat and standing in the way. For they use the word *viae* for the alleys by the barriers around the arena, and for the gangways up and down that separate the common people's sections on the sloping sides of the amphitheatre; and *cathedra* is the term for the space in the recess assigned for chairs.<sup>a</sup> So, conversely, "he is unhappy who has gone into any gathering whatever of the impious, and stood in any way at all of sinners, and has sat in any chair of pestilences." Let us take the general application, even when some other special interpretation is admissible. For there are things said with special intent which are of general bearing. When God recalls the Israelites to discipline or upbraids them, it surely applies to all men. When He threatens destruction to Egypt and Ethiopia, assuredly He warns every sinful nation of judgement to come. Thus the single case stands for the general class; every sinful race is Egypt and Ethiopia, in the same way as every public show is a gathering of the impious, the general class covering the single case.

IV. But lest anyone suppose us to be quibbling, I will turn to authority, the initial and primary

*anfractu* clear to me. But apart from archaeology and architecture the matter is unimportant. Tertullian makes a verbal point.

## TERTULLIAN

auctoritatem convertar ipsius signaculi nostri. Cum aquam ingressi Christianam fidem in legis suae verba profitemur, renuntiassse nos diabolo et pompae et [92] angelis eius ore nostro contestamur. Quid erit summum atque praecipuum, in quo diabolus et pompae et angeli eius censeantur, quam idololatria? Ex qua omnis immundus et nequam spiritus ut ita dixerim, quia nec diutius de hoc. Igitur si ex idololatria universam spectaculorum paraturam constare constiterit, indubitate praeiudicatum erit etiam ad spectacula pertinere renuntiationis nostrae testimonium in lavacro, quae diabolo et pompae et angelis eius sint mancipata, scilicet per idololatriam. Commemorabimus origines singulorum, quibus in cunabulis in saeculo adoleverint, exinde titulos quorundam, quibus nominibus nuncupentur, exinde apparatus, quibus superstitionibus instruantur, tum loca, quibus praesidibus dicentur, tum artes, quibus auctoribus deputentur. Si quid ex his non ad idolum pertinuerit, id neque ad idololatriam neque ad nostram eierationem pertinebit.

V. De originibus quidem ut secretioribus et ignotis penes plures nostrorum altius<sup>1</sup> nec aliunde investigandum fuit quam de instrumentis ethnicalium littera-

<sup>1</sup> Here I replace †artis of the Vienna text by the emendation altius which Oehler accepts. It probably represents something like the sense intended.

---

<sup>a</sup> σφραγίς, signaculum, ἐσφραγισμένος and consignatus (cf. *Apol.* 8)—the terms “seal” and “sealed,” which we are assured come from the mysteries, are used in and after the second century for baptisms; the neophyte was sealed on the brow in sign of a new ownership. Tertullian continues with the form of renunciation made by those baptized. See Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas*, p. 295.

<sup>b</sup> Klusmann supposes some words to be lost. Perhaps

## DE SPECTACULIS, iv.—v.

authority of our “seal.”<sup>a</sup> When we enter the water and profess the Christian faith in the terms prescribed by its law, we profess with our mouths that we have renounced the devil, his pomp and his angels. What shall we call the chief and outstanding matter, in which the devil and his pomps and his angels are recognized, rather than idolatry? From which every unclean and evil spirit, I may say<sup>b</sup>—but no more of that. So, if it shall be established that the whole equipment of the public shows is idolatry pure and simple, we have an indubitable decision laid down in advance, that this profession of renunciation made in baptism touches the public shows too, since they, being idolatry, belong to the devil, his pomp and his angels. We will therefore cite<sup>c</sup> the origins of one set of spectacles and another—showing how they were cradled in the world; next in order, the titles they bear, the names, to wit, by which they are called; next again their equipments, and the superstitions they serve; thereafter the places, and to what presiding spirits they are dedicated; and then the arts employed and their reputed authors. If among all these anything shall be found unconnected with an idol, we shall pronounce it to have no bearing on idolatry, to have no connexion with our renunciation.

V. First as to the origins, not universally known, indeed unknown among most of our people, we must go further afield in our inquiry, and our authority must be no other than the books of heathen litera-

aposiopesis, or perhaps a simple verb understood, may explain the text.

<sup>a</sup> He outlines the procedure followed in chapters 10-12; cf. beginning of ch. 13.

## TERTULLIAN

rum. Extant auctores multi, qui super ista re commentarios ediderunt. Ab his ludorum origo sic traditur: Lydos ex Asia transvenas in Etruria con-sedis-se Timaeus refert duce Tyrreno, qui fratri suo [92<sup>v</sup>] cesserat regni contentione. Igitur in Etruria inter ceteros ritus superstitionum suarum spectacula quo-que religionis nomine instituunt. Inde Romani arces-sitos artifices mutuuntur, tempus, enuntiationem, ut ludii a Lydis vocarentur. Sed etsi Varro ludios a ludo id est a lusu interpretatur, sicut et Lupercos ludios appellabant, quod ludendo discurrant, tamen eum lusum iuvenum et diebus festis et templis et religioni-bus reputat. Nihil iam de caussa vocabuli, cum rei caussa idololatria sit. Nam et cum promiscue ludi Liberalia vocarentur, honorem Liberi patris manifeste sonabant. Libero enim a rusticis primo fiebant ob beneficium quod ei adscribunt demonstrati gratia vini. Exinde ludi Consualia dicti, qui initio Neptu-num honorabant. Eundem enim et Consum vocant. Dehinc Ecurria ab equis Marti Romulus dixit; quam-quam et Consualia Romulo defendunt, quod ea Conso-dicaverit deo, ut volunt, consilii, eius scilicet, quo tunc

---

<sup>a</sup> Timaeus, the lost Greek historian, relentlessly criticized by Polybius (especially in book xii.), who found in him most of the faults possible for a historian. The Lydian origin of the Etruscans is in Herodotus, i. 94—"they sailed away to seek a livelihood and a country, till at last they came to the Ombrikoi where they founded cities and have dwelt ever since." Modern historians have from time to time rejected, accepted, and modified this story. Etruscan influence on Rome is much more decidedly historical.

<sup>b</sup> Varro, the great Roman antiquary, a contemporary of Cicero, somewhat dreaded by Cicero and much used by St. Augustine.

<sup>c</sup> Moiré usually spelled *Equirria*. There appear to have



## DE SPECTACULIS, v.

ture. There are many authors who have published memoirs on the matter. They give this account of the origin of the games. Lydians from Asia migrated and settled in Etruria, so Timaeus<sup>a</sup> tells us, under the leadership of Tyrrhenus, who in a dispute about the kingship had given way to his brother. In Etruria, then, among other rites involved by their superstitions, they institute public shows in the name of religion. From Etruria the Romans fetch the performers, and with them they borrow also the time and the name—the *ludii* are so called from the Lydians. Even if Varro<sup>b</sup> derives the *ludii* from *ludus* (that is, from playing)—just as they used to call the Luperci *ludii* because in play they run hither and thither,—he nevertheless reckons this playing of the youths as belonging to festal days, temples and matters of religion. But the verbal issue does not matter, when the real issue is idolatry. For since in a general way the games were called Liberalia, the sound of the name clearly signified the honour of Father Liber (Bacchus). For they were first held in honour of Liber by the countryfolk on account of the good service which they say he did them in making wine known. Then came the games originally held in honour of Neptune and called Consualia. For he is also styled Consus. After that Romulus named the Ecurria,<sup>c</sup> from horses, in honour of Mars—though they claim the Consualia as well for Romulus, arguing that he instituted them for Consus, the god (they say) of counsel—meaning the particular counsel

been two such festivals, 27th February and 14th March, both in honour of Mars and both celebrated with horse-races. Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 857 ff. On all the festivals see W. W. Fowler, *Roman Festivals*.

## TERTULLIAN

Sabinarum virginum rapinam militibus suis in matrimonia excogitavit. Probum plane consilium et nunc quoque inter ipsos Romanos iustum et licitum, ne dixerim penes deum. Facit enim et hoc ad originis maculam, ne bonum existimes quod initium a malo accepit, ab impudentia a violentia ab odio, a fratricida institutore, a filio Martis. Et nunc aræ Conso illi in circo demersa est ad primas metas sub terra cum inscriptione eiusmodi: CONSUS CONSILIO MARS DUELLO LARES † COILLO POTENTES. Sacrificant apud eam nonis Iuliis sacerdotes publici, XII. Kalend. Septembres flamen Quirinalis et virgines. De hinc idem Romulus Iovi Feretrio ludos instituit in Tarpeio, quos Tarpeios dictos et Capitolinos Piso tradit; post hunc Numa Pompilius Marti et Robigini fecit (nam et robiginis deam finxerunt); dehinc Tullus Hostilius, dehinc Ancus Martius et ceteri. Qui quos quem per ordinem et quibus idolis ludos instituerint, positum est apud Suetonium Tranquillum vel a quibus Tranquillus accepit. Sed haec satis erunt ad originis de idololatria reatum.

VI. Accedit ad testimonium antiquitatis subsecuta posteritas formam originis de titulis huius quoque temporis praeferens, per quos signatum est, cui idolo

---

<sup>a</sup> See Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*, c. 14, for this underground altar, Consus and the counsel. See also W. W. Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 178, 206 (date 21 August). His derivation of *Consus* is from *condere*.

<sup>b</sup> This reading of the ms., with the variant *cvm illo* in another, leaves a free field for fruitless guessing.

<sup>c</sup> L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi, consul 133 B.C. and historian, who, unlike some Roman historians who used Greek, wrote in Latin. His style pleased Gellius, *Noct. Att.* vii. 9. 1 "res perquam pure et venuste narrata a Pisone"; but Cicero thought him thin, *Brutus*, 27. 106 "annales sane exiliter scriptos."

## DE SPECTACULIS, v.—vi.

which he thought out of capturing the Sabine girls to be wives for his soldiers. An honourable counsel, indeed, to this very day just and lawful among the Romans, not to say in God's eyes ! It also contributes to the taint of their origin—lest you think that good which began with evil—that the games began with shamelessness, violence and hate, and a founder who slew his brother and was the son of Mars. There is still (I might add) an underground altar, dedicated to that Consus,<sup>a</sup> in the Circus, at the first turning-point, with this inscription : “ Consus in counsel, Mars in war, Lares Coillo <sup>b</sup> mighty.” Sacrifice is offered on it on the seventh day of July by the state priests, on the twentieth of August by the Flamen of Quirinus and the Vestal Virgins. Later on, the same Romulus instituted games for Jupiter Feretrius on the Tarpeian, which, Piso <sup>c</sup> has told us, were called Tarpeian and Capitoline games. After him Numa Pompilius started games for Mars and Robigo (for they also invented a goddess of rust) ; later Tullus Hostilius, later still Ancus Martius, and the rest in their order. And for what idols they instituted these games, you will find in Suetonius Tranquillus, or in the authors from whom Suetonius borrowed.<sup>d</sup> But so much will suffice on the guilty origin of the games in idolatry.

VI. The evidence of antiquity is reinforced by the later generations that followed. They show the general type of origin in the titles that still prevail—titles in which it is plainly expressed for what idol or

<sup>a</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, will be found in the Loeb Library ; but of the rest of his immense literary productiveness only scant remnants survive. We are told by Suidas that he wrote *On Spectacles and Games among the Romans*.

## TERTULLIAN

et cui superstitioni utriusque generis ludi notarentur. Megalenses enim et Apollinares, item Cereales et Neptunales et Latiare et Florales in commune celebrantur ; reliqui ludorum de natalibus et sollemnibus regum et publicis prosperitatibus et municipalibus festis superstitionis causas habent. Inter quos etiam privatorum memoriis legatariae editiones parentant, id quoque secundum institutionis antiquitatem. Nam et a primordio bifariam ludi censebantur, sacri et funebres id est deis nationum et mortuis. Sed de idololatria nihil differt apud nos, sub quo nomine et titulo, dum ad eosdem spiritus perveniat, quibus renuntiamus. Licebit mortuis, licebit deis suis faciant, perinde mortuis suis ut diis faciunt ; una condicio partis utriusque est, una idololatria, una renuntiatio nostra adversus idololatriam.

VII. Communis igitur origo ludorum utriusque generis, communes et tituli, ut de communibus causis. Perinde apparatus communes habeant necesse est de reatu generali idololatriae conditricis suae. Sed circensium paulo pompator suggestus, quibus proprie hoc nomen : pompa praecedens, quorum sit in semetipsa probans de simulacrorum serie, de imaginum agmine, de curribus, de tensis, de armamaxis, de sedibus, de coronis, de exuviis. Quanta praeterea sacra, quanta sacrificia praecedant, intercedant, succedant, quot collegia, quot sacerdotia, quot officia

for what superstition games of one kind or the other were designed. For instance the games of the Great Mother and Apollo, and again of Neptune, Jupiter Latiaris, and Flora are general festivals ; others of the games, celebrating royal birthdays and festivals, victories of the state, municipal feasts, have also a superstitious origin. Among them shows established by bequests do honour to the memory of private persons ; this also is in accordance with ancient precedent. For from the very beginning games were classed under two heads, sacred and funereal,—in other words games in honour of heathen gods and of dead men. But, in the matter of idolatry, it makes no difference to us under what name and title they are given, seeing it comes in the long run to the same spirits—which we renounce. Suppose their games are in honour of dead men, suppose they are in honour of their gods, they pay exactly the same honour to their dead as to their gods ; on either side you have one and the same state of things, one and the same idolatry, one and the same renunciation of idolatry on our part.

VII. The games then of one kind or the other have a common origin, and names in common also, as the reasons for their being held are the same. So too their equipment must be the same, under the common guilt of the idolatry which founded them. But rather more pompous is the outfit of the games in the circus, to which the name *pomp* properly belongs. The *pomp* (procession) comes first and shows in itself to whom it belongs, with the long line of images, the succession of statues, the cars, chariots, carriages, the thrones, garlands, robes. What sacred rites, what sacrifices, come at the beginning, in the middle, at the end ; what guilds, what priesthoods, what offices are<sup>2</sup> astir,—

## TERTULLIAN

moveantur, sciunt homines illius urbis, in qua daemoniorum conventus consedit. Ea si minore cura per provincias pro minoribus viribus administrantur, tamen omnes ubique circenses illuc deputandi, unde et petuntur, inde inquirantur,<sup>1</sup> unde sumuntur. Nam et rivulus tenuis ex suo fonte et surculus modicus ex sua fronde qualitatem originis continet. Viderit ambitio sive frugalitas eius \* \* sit.<sup>2</sup> Deum offendit [94] qualiscumque pompa circi: etsi pauca simulacra circumferat, in uno idololatria est; etsi unam tensam trahat, Iovis tamen plastrum est; quaevis idololatria sordide instructa vel modice locuples et splendida est censu criminis sui.

VIII. Ut et de locis secundum propositum exequar, circus Soli principaliter consecratur. Cuius aedes in medio spatio et effigies de fastigio aedis emicat, quod non putaverunt sub tecto consecrandum quem in aperto habent. Qui spectaculum primum a Circa [habent] Soli patri suo, ut volunt, editum affirmant, ab ea et circi appellationem argumentantur. Plane venefica eis utique negotium gessit hoc nomine, quorum sacerdos erat, daemoniis et angelis scilicet. Quot igitur in habitu loci illius idololatrias recognoscis? Singula ornamenta circi singula templa sunt. Ova honori Castorum adscribunt qui illos ovo editos

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler* reads *inquinantur*, "they are defiled at their source."

<sup>2</sup> *The Vatican text* marks a lacuna \* \*: *Oehler* for *sit* reads *si*, and makes one sentence of this and the next.

<sup>a</sup> He means Rome. Cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 44. 4 "urbem etiam quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque"; and Revelation xviii. 2.

<sup>b</sup> *Viderit* frequently begins a sentence in Tertullian, when he wishes to indicate he is done with a man or a matter. If odd in English, it is perhaps worth keeping.

<sup>c</sup> Seven egg-shaped balls were displayed in the circus,

## DE SPECTACULIS, VII.—VIII.

everybody knows in that city where the demons sit in conclave.<sup>a</sup> If less elaboration is bestowed on it all in the provinces, where there is less to spend, still all the shows of the circus everywhere must be attributed to their origin, must be examined at their source. For the little rivulet from its spring, the tiny shoot from its first leaf, has in it the nature of its origin. Let its splendour, let its frugality look to it <sup>b</sup>—the pomp of the circus, whatever its character, offends God. Even if the images are but few in its procession, one image is idolatry; if but one chariot is drawn, it is yet Jove's car; any idolatry in any form, meanly equipped, moderately rich, splendid, is still reckoned idolatry in its guilt.

VIII. To proceed according to plan, and deal next with the places, the circus is primarily dedicated to the Sun; the sun's temple is in the middle of it; the sun's effigy shines from the top of the temple. They did not think it right to pay sacred honours under a roof to him whom they have in the open above them. Those who maintain that the first circus spectacle was produced by Circe in honour of the Sun her father (as they choose to hold), argue that the name of the circus is derived from hers. Obviously the enchantress carried the business through (no doubt about it) in the name of those whose priestess she was; she did it, that is, for the demons and the fallen angels. In the very decoration of the place itself, how many idolatries do you recognize? The ornaments of the circus are in themselves so many temples. The eggs <sup>c</sup> are assigned to the honour of Castor and Pollux by those who do not one of which was removed on the completion of each of the circuits to be made.

## TERTULLIAN

credendo de cygno Iove non erubescunt. Delphines Neptuno vomunt, columnae Sessias a sementationibus, Messias a messibus, Tutulinas a tutela fructuum sustinent; ante eas tres arae trinis deis parent, Magnis Potentibus Valentibus. Eosdem Samothracas existimant. Obelisci enormitas, ut Hermateles affirmat, Soli prostituta. Scriptura eius unde eius et census: de Aegypto superstitio est. Frigebat daemonum concilium sine sua Matre Magna; ea itaque [94<sup>v</sup>] illic praesidet euripo. Consus, ut diximus, apud metas sub terra delitescit Murcias. Eas quoque idolum fecit: Murciam enim deam amoris volunt, cui in illa parte aedem voverunt.

Animadvertite, Christiane, quot nomina immunda possederint circum. Aliena est tibi religio, quam tot diaboli spiritus occupaverunt.

De locis quidem locus est retractandi ad praeveniendam quorundam interrogationem. Quid enim, inquis, si alio in tempore circum adiero, periclitabor de inquinamento? Nulla est praescriptio de locis. Nam non sola ista conciliabula spectaculorum, sed etiam templa ipsa sine periculo disciplinae adire servus dei potest urgente causa simplici dumtaxat, quae non pertineat ad proprium eius loci negotium vel officium. Ceterum et plateae et forum et balneae et stabula et ipsae domus nostrae sine idolis omnino

---

\* Of Hermateles nothing seems to be known. The true text may be *Hermapion*, for Ammianus Marcellinus in the fourth century transcribes (xvii. 4. 17) the inscription of the obelisk, "quem videmus in Circo, Hermapionis librum secuti interpretatum litteris subiccinus Graecis." But Hermapion also is very much unknown.



## DE SPECTACULIS, VIII.

blush to believe them sprung from the egg of the swan Jove. The dolphins spout in honour of Neptune. The columns carry images of Sessia (from sowing), of Messia (from mowing), of Tutulina (from tutelage of the crops). In front of them are seen three altars for the triple gods, the Great, the Potent, the Prevailing. They think these are Samothracian. The huge obelisk, as Hermateles<sup>a</sup> maintains, is set up for the sun; its inscription is like its origin; the superstition is Egyptian. The concourse of demons had been dull without their own Great Mother; so she presides over the trench.<sup>b</sup> Consus, as we said, is in hiding there underground at the goals—the Murcian goals; and these also are made by an idol. For they will have it that Murcia is a goddess of love, and they have dedicated a temple to her there.

Mark well, O Christian, how many unclean names have made the circus their own. It is an alien religion, none of thine, possessed by all those spirits of the devil.

And speaking of places, this will be the place for some words to anticipate the question that some will raise. What, say you, suppose that at some other time I approach the circus, shall I be in danger of pollution? There is no law laid down for us as to places. For not merely those places where men gather for the shows, but even temples, the servant of God may approach without risk to his Christian loyalty, if there be cause sufficient and simple, to be sure, unconnected with the business or character of the place. But the streets, the market, the baths, the taverns, even our houses, are none of them

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Suetonius, *Julius*, 39 “spatio Circi ab utraque parte producto et in gyrum euripo addito.”

## TERTULLIAN

non sunt: totum saeculum satanas et angeli eius repleverunt. Non tamen quod in saeculo sumus, a deo excidimus, sed si quid de saeculi criminibus attigerimus. Proinde si Capitolium, si Serapeum sacrificator vel adorator intravero, a deo excidam, quemadmodum circum vel theatrum spectator. Loca nos non contaminant per se, sed quae in locis fiunt, a quibus et ipsa loca contaminari altercati sumus: de *contaminatis contaminamur*. Propterea autem commemoramus, quibus eiusmodi loca dicentur ut eorum demonstramus esse quae in iis locis fiunt, quibus ipsa loca dicantur.

IX. Nunc de artificio quo circenses exhibentur. [95] Res equestris retro simplex: de dorso agebatur, et utique communis usus reus non erat. Sed cum ad ludos coactus est, transiit a dei munere ad daemoniorum officia. Itaque Castori et Polluci deputatur haec species, quibus equos a Mercurio distributos Stesichorus docet. Sed et Neptunus equestris est, quem Graeci ἑππιον appellant. Seiugas vero Iovi, quadrigas Soli, bigas Lunae sanxerunt. Sed et

primus Erichthonius currus et quattuor ausus  
iungere equos rapidusque rotis insistere victor.

Erichthonius, Minervae et Vulcani filius, et quidem de caduca in terram libidine, portentum est daemonicum, immo diabolus ipse, non coluber. Si vero Trochilus Argivus auctor est currus, primae Iunoni

---

<sup>a</sup> Virgil, *Georgics*, iii. 113 (Lord Burghclere).

<sup>b</sup> Apollodorus, *Library*, iii. 14. 6, explains the reference to the earth. One story made him a serpent, at any rate in appearance, for a while.

## DE SPECTACULIS, VIII.—IX.

altogether clear of idols. The whole world is filled with Satan and his angels. Yet not because we are in the world, do we fall from God ; but only if in some way we meddle with the sins of the world. Thus if, as a sacrificer and worshipper, I enter the Capitol or the temple of Serapis, I shall fall from God—just as I should if a spectator in circus or theatre. Places do not of themselves defile us, but the things done in the places, by which even the places themselves (as we have argued) are defiled. We are defiled by the defiled. It is on that account that we remind you who they are to whom places of this sort are dedicated, that we may prove that they to whom the places are dedicated, are lords of what is done in the places.

IX. Now as to the arts displayed in the circus games. Equestrian skill was a simple thing in the past, mere horseback riding ; in any case there was no guilt in the ordinary use of the horse. But when the horse was brought into the games, it passed from being God's gift into the service of demons. So to Castor and Pollux is dedicated this kind of exhibition, the pair to whom Stesichorus says horses were assigned by Mercury. But Neptune also has to do with horses ; he is called *Hippios* among the Greeks. When they harness the horses, the four-horse chariot is consecrated to the sun, the two-horse to the moon. But then again,

King Erichthonius it was who first  
Harnessed four horses to his car ; and stood  
Lord of fleet wheels.<sup>a</sup>

Erichthonius,<sup>b</sup> a son of Minerva and Vulcan, offspring of lust that fell to earth, is himself a demon monster—no, a devil himself, not a snake. If indeed Trochilus the Argive is the inventor of the first chariot, he

## TERTULLIAN

id opus suum dedicavit. Si Romae Romulus quadrigam primus ostendit, puto et ipse inter idola conscriptus est, si idem est Quirinus. Talibus auctoribus quadrigae productae merito et aurigas coloribus idololatriae vestierunt. Namque initio duo soli fuerunt, albus et russeus. Albus hiemi ob nives candidas, russeus aestati ob solis ruborem voti erant. Sed postea tam voluptate quam superstitione provecta russeum alii Marti, alii album Zephyris consecraverunt, prasinum vero Terrae matri vel verno, venetum Caelo et Mari vel autumnno. Cum autem omnis species idololatriae damnata sit a deo, utique etiam illa damnatur, quae elementis mundialibus profanatur.

[95<sup>v</sup>] X. Transeamus ad scaenicas res, quarum et originem communem et titulos pares secundum ipsam ab initio ludorum appellationem et administrationem coniunctam cum re equestri iam ostendimus. Apparatus etiam ex ea parte consortes, qua ad scaenam a templis et aris et illa infelicitate turis et sanguinis inter tibias et tubas itur duobus inquinatissimis arbitris funerum et sacrorum, dissignatore et haruspice. Ita cum de originibus ludorum ad circenses transiimus, inde nunc ad scaenicos ludos dirigemus a loci vitio.<sup>1</sup> Theatrum proprie sacrarium Veneris est. Hoc denique modo id genus operis in saeculo evasit.

<sup>1</sup> *The MS. reading is a loci vitio: initio is a correction early made; but in both cases the problem is punctuation. The Vienna text puts the full stop at dirigemus; I have shifted it, as does Kellner.*

---

<sup>a</sup> Oehler says that the *dissignator* ordered the procession in both cases, and the *haruspex* was in both cases busy with sacrifice.

## DE SPECTACULIS, ix.—x.

dedicated that work of his to Juno. If at Rome Romulus was the first to display a four-horse chariot, he, I fancy, is enrolled among the idols himself, if he and Quirinus are the same. Such being the inventors who produced them, chariots very properly have their drivers clad in the colours of idolatry. For at first there were but two colours, white and red. White was sacred to Winter, for the gleaming white of the snow, red to Summer because of the sun's redness. Afterwards as pleasure and superstition gained ground together, some dedicated the red to Mars, others the white to the Zephyrs, the green to Mother Earth or Spring, the blue to Sky and Sea or Autumn. But since idolatry in every form has been condemned by God, that form also is assuredly condemned which is consecrated to the elements of nature.

X. Let us pass on to the stage plays. Their origin we have shown to be the same, the divine titles they bear identical, since they were called "games" (*ludi*) from the very beginning, and were exhibited in conjunction with equestrian displays. Their equipment on that side is parallel. The path to the theatre is from the temples and the altars, from that miserable mess of incense and blood, to the tune of flutes and trumpets; and the masters of the ceremonies are those two all-polluted adjuncts of funeral and sacrifice, the undertaker and the soothsayer.<sup>a</sup> So, as we turned from the origins of the games to the shows of the circus, now we will turn to the plays of the stage, beginning with the evil character of the place. The theatre is, properly speaking, the shrine of Venus; and that was how this kind of structure came to exist in the world. For often

## TERTULLIAN

Nam saepe censores nascentia cum maxime theatra destruebant moribus consulentes, quorum scilicet periculum ingens de lascivia providebant, ut iam hic ethnicis in testimonium cedat sententia ipsorum nobiscum faciens et nobis in exaggerationem disciplinae etiam humana praerogativa. Itaque Pompeius Magnus solo theatro suo minor cum illam arcem omnium turpitudinum extruxisset, veritus quandoque memoriae suae censoriam animadversionem Veneris aedem superposuit et ad dedicationem edicto populum vocans non theatrum, sed Veneris templum nuncupavit, cui subiecimus, inquit, gradus spectaculorum. Ita damnatum et damnandum opus templi titulo praetexit et disciplinam superstitione delusit. Sed Veneri et Libero convenit. Duo ista daemonia conspirata et coniurata inter se sunt ebrietatis et libidinis. Itaque theatrum Veneris Liberi quoque domus est. Nam et alios ludos scaenicos Liberalia proprie vocabant, praeterquam Libero devotos, quae sunt Dionysia penes Graecos, etiam a Libero institutos. Et est plane in artibus quoque scaenicis Liberi et Veneris patrocinium. Quae privata et propria sunt scaenae, de gestu et corporis flexu mollitiae Veneris et Liberi immolant, illi per sexum,

---

<sup>a</sup> *Praerogativa*, one of Tertullian's legal terms; human morality, as it were, cast its vote first on the question.

<sup>b</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, xiv. 20, states how, in A.D. 60, when Nero started his *Neronia* at Rome on the model of Greek games, some recalled that Pompey had been censured by his elders for building a permanent theatre; formerly temporary stage and seats (*subitariis gradibus*) had sufficed. For the dedication to Venus cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* viii. 7. 20 "dedicatione templi Veneris Victricis"; Suetonius, *Claudius*, 21, Claudius restored the theatre after a fire, and opened the

## DE SPECTACULIS, x.

the censors would destroy the theatres at their very birth ; they did it in the interests of morals, for they foresaw that great danger to morals must arise from the theatre's licentiousness. So here the Gentiles have their own opinion coinciding with ours as evidence, and we have the preliminary judgement<sup>a</sup> of human morality to reinforce Christian law. So when Pompey the Great<sup>b</sup>—and there was nothing except his theatre greater than himself—when Pompey had built that citadel of all uncleanness, he was afraid that some day the censors would condemn his memory ; so he built on top of it a chapel to Venus, and, when he summoned the people by edict to its dedication, he called it not a theatre but a temple of Venus, “ under which,” he said, “ we have set seats for viewing the shows.” So a structure, condemned and deservedly condemned, he screened with the title of a temple, and humbugged morality with superstition. But Venus and Bacchus do very well together, demons of drunkenness and lust, two yoke-devils sworn to either's purpose.<sup>c</sup> So the theatre of Venus is also the house of Liber (Bacchus). For there were other stage plays to which they suitably gave the name *Liberalia* (*Dionysia* among the Greeks), not only dedicated to Liber, but instituted by Liber. And quite obviously Liber and Venus are the patrons of the arts of the stage. Those features of the stage peculiarly and especially its own, that effeminacy of gesture and posture, they dedicate to Venus and Liber, wanton gods, the one in her sex,

*ludos*, “after first offering sacrifice at the temples in the upper part of the auditorium.” Cf. *Apology*, 6.

<sup>c</sup> *Henry V.* ii. ii. 106, without the excuse of a quotation in the Latin.

## TERTULLIAN

illi per luxum dissolutis. Quae vero voce et modis et organis et litteris <sup>1</sup> transiguntur, Apollines et Musas et Minervas et Mercurios mancipēs habent.

Oderis, Christiane, quorum auctores non potes non odisse.

Iam nunc volumus suggerere de artibus et de his, quorum auctores in nominibus exsecramur. Scimus nihil esse nomina mortuorum, sicut nec ipsa simulacra eorum; sed non ignoramus, qui sub istis nominibus institutis simulacris operentur et gaudeant et divinitatem mentiantur, nequam spiritus scilicet, daemones. Videmus igitur etiam artes eorum honoribus dicatas esse, qui nomina incolunt auctorum earum, nec ab idololatria vacare, quarum institutores etiam propterea dei habentur. Immo quod ad artes pertinent, altius praescripsisse<sup>2</sup> debemus, daemones ab initio [96<sup>v</sup>] prospicientes sibi inter cetera idololatriae etiam spectaculorum inquinamenta, quibus hominem a domino avocarent et suo honori obligarent, eiusmodi quoque artium ingenia inspirasse. Neque enim ab aliis procuratum fuisset quod ad illos perventurum esset nec per alios tunc homines edidissent quam per ipsos, in quorum nominibus et imaginibus et historiis fallaciam consecrationis sibi negotium acturi con-

<sup>1</sup> *lyris is an old and very attractive correction adopted by Oehler: Kellner keeps to litteris.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Vienna text substitutes percepisse for the older reading, which I restore; praescribo and its derivative praescriptio are a favourite idea of Tertullian.*

---

<sup>a</sup> It is possible to take *institutis* as "customs" and render "those names, customs, images"; but in this tract at least there is hardly another case of asyndeton.

<sup>b</sup> He suggests that men invented arts and musical instru-



## DE SPECTACULIS, x.

the other in his dress ; while all that is done with voice and song, instrument and book, is the affair of the Apollos and the Muses, the Minervas and Mercuries.

You, O Christian, will hate the things, when you cannot but hate the authors of them.

And now we would add a word on the arts and the things, whose authors we execrate in their very names. We know that the names of dead men are nothing—just as their images are nothing—but we are not unaware who are at work under those names and behind the images set up for them,<sup>a</sup> what joy they take in them, and how they feign deity,—I mean, evil spirits, demons. We see then the arts consecrated to their glorification, who usurp the names of the authors of those arts, and that the arts do not lack the taint of idolatry when those who instituted them are as a result called gods.<sup>b</sup> Further, as regards the arts, we ought to have entered our demurrer at an earlier point and pled that the demons from the very beginning took thought for themselves and among the other pollutions of idolatry devised those of the spectacles for the purpose of turning man from his Lord and binding him to their own glorification, and so inspired these ingenious arts. For no others but they would have devised what should turn to their profit ; nor would they have given the arts to the world at that time through the agency of any other men than those by whose names and images and legends they determined they would negotiate the trick of their own consecration.

ments, and that demons stole the credit, to get themselves called gods ; *e.g.*, Apollo was supposed to have invented the lyre, unless Hermes did it, as in the Homeric hymn,

## TERTULLIAN

stituerunt. Ut ordo peragatur, ineamus etiam agonum retractatum.

XI. Origo istis de ludorum propinquitate est. Inde et ipsi sacri vel funebres instituti aut deis nationum aut mortuis fiunt. Perinde tituli: Olympia Iovi, quae sunt Romae Capitolina, item Herculi Nemea, Neptuno Isthmia, ceteri mortuorum varii agones. Quid ergo mirum, si vel apparatus agonum idololatria conspurcat de coronis profanis, de sacerdotalibus praesidibus, de collegiariis ministris, de ipso postremo boum sanguine? Ut de loco suppleam et de loco communi, pro collegio artium Musicarum et Minervarium et Apollinarium, etiam Martialium per duellum, per tubam in stadio circum aemulantur, quod utique templum est et ipsum eius idoli, cuius sollemnitates agit. Sed et gymnicas artes Castorum et Herculum et Mercuriorum disciplinae prodiderunt.

XII. Superest illius insignissimi spectaculi ac re-  
[97] ceptissimi recognitio. Munus dictum est ab officio, quoniam officium etiam muneris nomen est. Officium autem mortuis hoc spectaculo facere se veteres arbitrabantur, posteaquam illud humaniore atrocitate temperaverunt. Nam olim, quoniam animas defunctorum humano sanguine propitiari creditum erat, captivos vel mali status servos mercati in exequiis immolabant. Postea placuit impietatem voluptate adumbrare. Itaque quos paraverant, armis quibus

---

<sup>a</sup> The text here is uncertain, and I have restored Oehler's reading. I cannot claim to feel sure that I understand the passage.

## DE SPECTACULIS, x.—xii.

To keep to our plan of procedure, let us proceed to deal with the contests.

XI. Their origin is akin to that of the games. Hence they too are instituted as sacred or as funereal, and are performed either for the gods of the Gentiles or for dead men. Take their titles—Olympian games in honour of Jupiter (these at Rome are Capitoline games), Nemean for Hercules, Isthmian for Neptune; the rest are contests in honour of the dead. What is there then to wonder at, if the whole equipment of these contests is stained with idolatry—with profane crowns, priestly judges, attendants from various sacred colleges, and, finally, the blood of bulls? To add a supplemental word on the place<sup>a</sup>—a place held in common as a college of the arts of the Muses, of Minerva, of Apollo, yes! and of Mars too,—in the stadium with war and with trumpet they imitate the circus. It too is a temple of the idol whose solemn rites are being performed. The gymnastic acts in their turn originated with their Castors and Herculesees and Mercuries.

XII. It remains to examine the most famous, the most popular spectacle of all. It is called *munus* (a service) from being a service due; *munus* and *officium* mean the same thing. The ancients thought that by this sort of spectacle they rendered a service to the dead, after they had tempered it with a more cultured form of cruelty. For of old, in the belief that the souls of the dead are propitiated with human blood, they used at funerals to sacrifice captives or slaves of poor quality whom they bought. Afterwards it seemed good to obscure their impiety by making it a pleasure. So after the persons pro-

## TERTULLIAN

tunc et qualiter poterant eruditos, tantum ut occidi discerent, mox edicto die inferiarum apud tumulos erogabant. Ita mortem homicidiis consolabantur. Haec muneri origo. Sed paulatim provecti ad tantam gratiam, ad quantam et crudelitatem, quia feriarum voluptati satis non fiebat nisi et feris humana corpora dissiparentur. Quod ergo mortuis litabatur, utique parentationi deputabatur; quae species proinde idololatria est, quoniam et idololatria parentationis est species: tam haec quam illa mortuis ministrat. In mortuorum autem idolis daemonia consistunt.

Ut et titulos considerem, licet transierit hoc genus editionis ab honoribus mortuorum ad honores viventium, quaesturas dico et magistratus et flaminia et sacerdotia cum tamen nominis dignitas idololatriae crimine teneatur, necesse est quicquid dignitatis nomine administratur communicet etiam maculas [97<sup>v</sup>] eius, a qua habet causas. Idem de apparatus interpretabimur in ipsorum honorum suggestu deputandis, quod purpurae, quod<sup>a</sup> fasces, quod vittae, quod coronae, quod denique contiones et edicta et pultes

<sup>a</sup> There is no certainty in the text here. The ms. apparently has *ferarum*, which must be wrong. *Feriarum* and *ferorum* are both printed. *Ferorum* gives the antithesis between savage men and savage beasts. Perhaps *inferiarum* should be repeated; it is grim enough coming after the *ad tantam gratiam* clause; the pleasure of the funeral still lacked something, unless etc. But I am reluctant to put a conjecture of my own in the text.

<sup>b</sup> This may be paraphrased to bring out the sense: "So, since an offering was made to the dead, the whole proceedings (including gladiator and beast) were counted as funeral rites. Even so regarded, it is idolatry; for idolatry is in essence the worshipping of the dead."

<sup>c</sup> I am not clear that *tituli* may not again mean items in an indictment.

## DE SPECTACULIS, XII.

cured had been trained in such arms as they then had and as best they might—their training was to learn to be killed!—they then did them to death on the appointed funeral day at the tombs. So they found comfort for death in murder. This is the origin of the *munus*. But by and by they progressed to the same height in refinement as in cruelty; for the pleasure of the holiday lacked something, unless savage beasts too had their share in tearing men's bodies to pieces.<sup>a</sup> What was offered to appease the dead was counted as a funeral rite.<sup>b</sup> This type of thing is idolatry, for idolatry too is a type of funeral rite; the one and the other are alike service to the dead. For in the images of the dead demons have their abode.

If we are considering names,<sup>c</sup>—though this class of public entertainment has passed from being a compliment to the dead to being a compliment to the living on entering office (I mean quaestorships, magistracies, flaminates and priesthoods),—still, since the guilt of idolatry sticks to the dignity of the name, whatever is done in the name of dignity must inevitably share the taint of its origin.<sup>d</sup>

We must give the same interpretation to the equipments which are reckoned among the ornaments of office. The purple, the rods (*fascēs*), the fillets and garlands, and then the harangues and edicts, and the dinners on the eve of installation,

<sup>a</sup> It is argued that complimentary games, given in honour of the *living* (e.g. *pontificales ludi*, Suetonius, *Aug.* 44), can have no taint of worship of the dead; he urges that it all began in idolatry, and cannot escape the guilt of its origin. The antithesis with which he plays does not help to make it lucid.

## TERTULLIAN

pridianae sine pompa diaboli, sine invitatione daemonum non sunt. Quid ego de horrendo loco perorem, quem nec periuria sustinent? Pluribus enim et asperioribus nominibus amphitheatrum consecratur quam Capitolium : omnium daemonum templum est. Tot illic immundi spiritus considunt, quot homines capit. Ut et de artibus concludam, Martem et Dianam utriusque ludi praesides novimus.

XIII. Satis, opinor, implevimus ordinem, quot et quibus modis spectacula idololatriam committant, de originibus, de titulis, de apparatusibus, de locis, de artificiis, quo certi simus nulla ex parte competere nobis ea, qui bis idolis renuntiamus. Non quod idolum sit aliquid, ut apostolus ait, sed quoniam quae faciunt daemoniis faciunt consistentibus scilicet in consecrationibus idolorum, sive mortuorum sive, ut putant, deorum. Propterea igitur, quoniam utraque species idolorum condicionis unius est, dum mortui et dei unum sunt, utraque idololatria abstinemus. Nec minus templa quam monumenta despuimus, neutram aram novimus, neutram effigiem adoramus, non sacrificamus, non parentamus. Sed neque de sacrificio et parentato edimus, quia non possumus cenam dei edere et cenam daemoniorum. Si ergo gulam et ventrem ab inquinamentis liberamus, quanto magis angustiora nostra, et aures et oculos, ab idolothytis et necrothytis voluptatibus abstinemus, quae non

<sup>a</sup> He seems to mean that the perjurer lightly involves himself with endless gods in his false oaths, but even the perjurer could not face so many as frequent the amphitheatre.

<sup>b</sup> "Twofold" is interpreted, as once before entering the baptistery, and then in it. A *palmaria emendatio* (for *quibus*) says Oehler.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 4, x. 19, 20.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. x. 21.

## DE SPECTACULIS, XII.—XIII.

do not lack the pomp of the devil nor the invocation of demons.

Finally, what am I to say about that dreadful place, the amphitheatre? Even perjury could not face it.<sup>a</sup> For it is dedicated to more names, and more awful names, than the Capitol itself; it is the temple of all demons. There are as many unclean spirits gathered there as it can seat men. And, by way of a last word on the arts concerned, we know that Mars and Diana are the patrons of both types of games.

XIII. Enough, I think, has been said to complete our plan of procedure, in proving in what ways, and in how many ways, the spectacles involve idolatry. We have dealt with origins, names, equipment, place and arts. So that we may be certain that in no aspect are the spectacles consonant with our twofold<sup>b</sup> profession of the renunciation of idols. "Not that an idol is anything," says the apostle, "but what they do, they do in honour of demons,"<sup>c</sup> who plant themselves in the consecrated images of—whatever they are, dead men or, as *they* think, gods. So on that account, since both kinds of idol stand on the same footing (dead men and gods are one and the same thing), we abstain from both kinds of idolatry. Temples or tombs, we abominate both equally; we know neither sort of altar; we adore neither sort of image; we pay no sacrifice; we pay no funeral rite. No, and we do not eat of what is offered in sacrificial or funeral rite, because "we cannot eat of the Lord's supper and the supper of demons."<sup>d</sup> If then we try to keep our gullet and belly free from defilement, how much more our nobler parts, our eyes and ears, do we guard from the pleasures of idol sacrifice and sacrifice to the dead—pleasures

## TERTULLIAN

intestinis transiguntur, sed in ipso spiritu et anima digeruntur, quorum munditia magis ad deum pertinet quam intestinorum.

XIV. Nunc interposito nomine idololatriæ, quod solum subiectum sufficere debet ad abdicationem spectaculorum, alia iam ratione tractemus ex abundanti, propter eos maxime qui sibi blandiuntur quod non nominatim abstinencia ista præscripta sit. Quasi parum etiam de spectaculis pronuntietur, cum concupiscentiæ sæculi damnantur. Nam sicut pecuniæ vel dignitatis vel gulæ vel libidinis vel gloriæ, ita et voluptatis concupiscentia est; species autem voluptatis etiam spectacula. Opinor, generaliter nominatæ concupiscentiæ continent in se et voluptates, æque generaliter intellectæ voluptates specialiter et in spectacula disseruntur.

XV. Ceterum rettulimus supra de locorum conditione, quod non per semetipsa nos inquinant, sed per ea quæ illic geruntur, per quæ, simul inquinamentum combiberunt, tunc etiam in alteros respuunt. Viderit ergo, ut diximus, principalis titulus, idololatria; reliquas ipsarum rerum qualitates contra ut dei omnes feramus.<sup>1</sup> Deus præcepit spiritum sanctum, utpote pro naturæ suæ bono tenerum et delicatum, tranquillitate et lenitate et quiete et pace tractare, non furore, non bile, non ira, non dolore inquietare. Huic quomodo cum spectaculis poterit convenire? Omne enim spectaculum sine concussione spiritus non

<sup>1</sup> *This half sentence but for the insertion of the ut is as the Codex Agobardinus gives it. contra ferre the commentators have alleged to be equivalent to conferre or committere, for which Kellner knows of no analogy. A variety of conjectural alterations are made, but are not convincing. But there can be little doubt as to what Tertullian meant us to understand, in whatever form time has given it to us.*



not of gut and digestion, but of spirit, soul and suggestion <sup>a</sup>—and it is purity of these far more than of the intestines that God has a right to claim of us.

XIV. We have now established the charge of idolatry, enough of itself to warrant our abstaining from the shows. But let us go a step further and look at it in another way, chiefly for the benefit of those who flatter themselves that such abstention is not definitely prescribed—as if not enough were said about the shows, when the lusts of the world are condemned. For, just as there is a lust for money, a lust for dignity, for greed, for impurity, for vainglory, so there is a lust for pleasure. The shows are a sort of pleasure. Lusts, named as a class, include, I would suppose, pleasures also; similarly pleasures, understood as a class, include the special case of the shows.

XV. We have dealt above with the matter of the places, urging that the places do not of themselves pollute us, but through the things done in them—things from which the places imbibe defilement and then spit it out again on others.

So much, then, for the chief count in the indictment—idolatry. Let us now contrast the other characteristics of the shows with the things of God. God has instructed us to approach the Holy Spirit,—in its <sup>b</sup> very nature tender and sensitive,—in tranquillity, gentleness, quiet and peace; not in madness, bile, anger and pain to vex it.<sup>c</sup> What concord can the Holy Spirit have with the spectacles? There is no public spectacle without violence to the

<sup>a</sup> A rather free rendering, to try to keep his antithesis.

<sup>b</sup> The Oxford translator (C. Dodgson) uses the masculine pronoun throughout.

<sup>c</sup> Eph. iv. 30, 31.

## TERTULLIAN

est. Ubi enim voluptas, ibi et studium, per quod scilicet voluptas sapit ; ubi studium, ibi et aemulatio, per quam studium sapit. Porro et ubi aemulatio, ibi et furor et bilis et ira et dolor et cetera ex his, quae cum his non competunt disciplinae. Nam et si qui modeste et probe spectaculis fruitur pro dignitatis vel aetatis vel etiam naturae suae condicionē, non tamen immobilis animi est et sine tacita spiritus passione. Nemo ad voluptatem venit sine affectu, nemo affectum sine casibus suis patitur. Ipsi casus incitamenta sunt affectus. Ceterum si cessat affectus, nulla est voluptas, et est reus iam ille vanitatis eo conveniens, ubi nihil consequitur. Sed puto, [autem] etiam vanitas extranea est nobis. Quid quod et ipse se iudicat inter eos positus, quorum se simul<sup>1</sup> nolens utique detestatorem confitetur? Nobis satis non est, si ipsi nihil tale facimus, nisi et talia factitantibus non conferamur. "Si furem," inquit, "videbas, concurrebas cum eo." Utinam ne in saeculo quidem simul cum illis moreremur. Sed tamen in saecularibus separamur, quia saeculum dei est, saecularia autem diaboli.

XVI. Cum ergo furor interdicatur nobis, ab omni spectaculo auferimur, etiam a circo, ubi proprie furor praesidet. Aspice populum ad id spectaculum iam [99] cum furore venientem, iam tumultuosum, iam cae-

<sup>1</sup> simul is the ms. reading, kept by the Vienna editors. Oehler and Kellner adopt the correction *similem*, with the rendering, "whom he does not wish to resemble."

<sup>a</sup> Or, possibly, the Holy Spirit. Below in *tacita spiritus passione* it is clearly the human spirit.

<sup>b</sup> *Disciplinae* may also be rendered more specifically "Christian standards."

<sup>c</sup> Oehler compares the story of Alypius at the games in Augustine, *Conf.* vi. 8 "ceciditque miserabilis quam ille quo cadente factus est clamor." <sup>d</sup> Psalm xlix. 18.

## DE SPECTACULIS, xv.—xvi.

spirit.<sup>a</sup> For where there is pleasure, there is eagerness, which gives pleasure its flavour. Where there is eagerness, there is rivalry which gives its flavour to eagerness. Yes, and then, where there is rivalry, there also are madness, bile, anger, pain, and all the things that follow from them, and (like them) are incompatible with moral discipline.<sup>b</sup> For even if a man enjoy the spectacles in modest and upright fashion, agreeably to his dignity, his age, and his natural character, still he cannot with a mind quite unstirred or without some unspoken agitation of spirit. No one ever comes to pleasure without some feeling, no one has this feeling without some lapse; and the lapses actually contribute to the feeling.<sup>c</sup> But if this feeling flags, pleasure there is none; and the man may be condemned as an empty-minded fellow, who goes where he gains nothing. But, I think, the empty-minded is foreign to us. And, further, what of this?—that a man really condemns himself when he finds himself set among others, with whom he does not wish to be,—which means that he owns to himself he detests them? It is not enough for us to abstain ourselves from doing such things, unless we also keep clear of those who do them. “If thou sawest a thief,” says Scripture,<sup>d</sup> “thou didst consent with him.” Oh! if only we had not to live in the world along with them! Still, we are separated from them in all that is worldly. For the world is God’s; what is worldly is the devil’s.

XVI. Seeing then that madness is forbidden us, we keep ourselves from every public spectacle—including the circus, where madness of its own right rules. Look at the populace coming to the show—mad already! disorderly, blind, excited—already

## TERTULLIAN

cum, iam de sponsionibus concitatum. Tardus est illi praetor, semper oculi in urna eius cum sortibus volutantur. Dehinc ad signum anxii pendunt, unius dementiae una vox est. Cognosce dementiae de vanitate: misit, dicunt et nuntiant invicem quod simul ab omnibus visum est. Teneo testimonium caecitatis: non vident missum quid sit, mappam putant; sed est diaboli ab alto praecipitati figura. Ex eo itaque itur in furias et animos et discordias et quicquid non licet sacerdotibus pacis. Inde maledicta, convicia sine iustitia odii, etiam suffragia sine merito amoris. Quid enim suum consecuturi sunt, qui illic agunt, qui sui non sunt? Nisi forte hoc solum, per quod sui non sunt: de aliena infelicitate contristantur, de aliena felicitate laetantur. Quicquid optant, quicquid abominantur, extraneum ab iis est; ita et amor apud illos otiosus et odium iniustum. An forsitan sine causa amare liceat quam sine causa odisse? Deus certe etiam cum causa prohibet odisse, qui inimicos diligere iubet; deus etiam cum causa maledicere non sinit, qui maledicentes benedici praecipit. Sed circo quid amarius, ubi ne principibus quidem aut civibus suis parcunt? Si quid horum, quibus circus furit, alicubi conpetit sanctis, etiam in circo licebit, si vero nusquam, ideo nec in circo.

---

<sup>a</sup> The throwing or dropping of the handkerchief, the signal for the start; cf. Martial, xii. 28 (29); Suetonius, *Nero*, 22. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, i. 45, "Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky."

<sup>c</sup> The reader may take it as escape from themselves, which Tertullian does not commend.

## TERTULLIAN

XVII. Similiter inpudicitiam omnem amoliri iubemur. Hoc igitur modo etiam a theatro separamur, [99<sup>v</sup>] quod est privatum consistorium inpudicitiae, ubi nihil probatur quam quod alibi non probatur. Ita summa gratia eius de spurcitia plurimum concinnata est, quam Atellanus gesticulatur, quam mimus etiam per muliebres res repraesentat, sensum sexus et pudoris exterminans, ut facilius domi quam in scaena erubescant, quam denique pantomimus a pueritia patitur ex corpore, ut artifex esse possit. Ipsa etiam prostibula, publicae libidinis hostiae, in scaena proferuntur, plus miserae in praesentia feminarum, quibus solis latebant, perque omnis aetatis, omnis dignitatis ora transducuntur; locus, stipes, elogium, etiam quibus opus non est, praedicatur, etiam (taceo de reliquis) [etiam] quae in tenebris et in speluncis suis delitescere decebat, ne diem contaminarent. Erubescat senatus, erubescant ordines omnes; ipsae illae pudoris sui interemprices de gestibus suis ad lucem et populum expavescentes semel anno erubescunt.<sup>1</sup>

Quodsi nobis omnis impudicitia exsecranda est, cur liceat audire quod loqui non licet, cum etiam scurrilitatem et omne vanum verbum iudicatum a deo sciamus? Cur aequae liceat videre quae facere flagitium est? Cur quae ore prolata communicant homi-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Oehler prints the indicative erubescunt for the ms. subjunctive, and Kellner follows him. It is stronger, and it squares better with expavescentes.*

<sup>a</sup> Excessive irony and an uncertain text together make meaning and translation very doubtful.

<sup>b</sup> He refers to the custom mentioned by Valerius Maximus, ii.10. 8 at the Floralia.

## DE SPECTACULIS, XVII.

XVII. In like manner we are bidden to put away from us all impurity. By this command we are cut off once for all from the theatre, the proper home of all impurity, where nothing wins approval but what elsewhere has no approval. Its supreme charm is above all things contrived by its filth—filth in the gestures of the actor of the farce—filth acted by the buffoon playing the woman, banishing all sense of sex and shame, so that they blush more readily at home than on the stage,<sup>a</sup>—filth that the pantomime undergoes, in his own person, from boyhood, to make him an artist. The very prostitutes,<sup>b</sup> the victims of public lust,<sup>c</sup> are produced on the stage, more unhappy in the presence of other women—the only class in the community whose notice they escape; they are paraded before the faces of every rank and age; proclamation is made of their abode, their price, their record, even before those who do not need the detail; yes, and more (and I say nothing of the rest) that ought to be kept hidden in the darkness of their dens and not pollute the daylight. Let the senate blush; let all ranks blush together. Those women themselves, who have murdered their own shame, shudder (you can see it in their gestures) to find themselves in the light and before the populace, and blush once in the year.

But if all impurity is to be abominated by us, why should it be lawful to hear what we may not speak, when we know that buffoonery and every idle word is judged by God? Why in like manner should it be lawful to see what it is sin to do? Why should we

<sup>a</sup> This phrase (*cf.* ch. 19 “*publicae voluptatis hostiae*”) may be taken to refer to their exhibition on the stage, not to their trade or history.

## TERTULLIAN

[100] nem, ea per aures et oculos admissa non videantur hominem communicare, cum spiritui appareant aures et oculi nec possit mundus praestari cuius apparitores inquinantur? Habes igitur et theatri interdictionem de interdictione impudicitiae. Si et doctrinam saecularis litteraturae ut stultitiae apud deum deputatam aspernamur, satis praescribitur nobis et de illis speciebus spectaculorum, quae saeculari litteratura lusoriam vel agonisticam scaenam dispungunt. Quodsi sunt tragoediae et comoediae scelerum et libidinum auctrices<sup>1</sup> cruentae et lascivae, impiae et prodigae, nullius rei aut atrocis aut vilis commemoratio melior est: quod in facto reicitur, etiam in dicto non est recipiendum.

XVIII. Quodsi et stadium contendas in scripturis nominari, sane obtinebis. Sed quae in stadio geruntur, indigna conspectu tuo non negabis, pugnos et calces et colaphos et omnem petulantiam manus et quamcumque humani oris, id est divinae imaginis, depugnationem. Non probabis usquam vanos cursus et iaculatus et saltus vaniores, nusquam tibi vires aut iniuriosae aut vanae placebunt, sed nec cura facticii corporis, ut plasticam dei supergressa, et propter Graeciae otium atiles homines oderis. Et palaestrica diaboli negotium est: primos homines diabolus elisit. Ipse caestus colubrina vis est, tenax ad occupandum, tortuosa ad obligandum, liquida ad elabendum.

<sup>1</sup> auctrices adopted by Oehler, actrices by the Vienna edition, for autrices of MS.

<sup>a</sup> St. Mark, vii. 20.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 24. St. Paul's references to Greek games, familiar to him at Tarsus, are many,—including boxing and racing, "striving lawfully," finishing the course, the award of the crown, and the disqualifying of the candidate.

<sup>c</sup> More strictly "fed," like poultry. The Greek athlete

## DE SPECTACULIS, xvii.—xviii.

suppose that those things, which spoken by the mouth defile the man,<sup>a</sup> should not defile the man when welcomed in by eyes and ears? Ears and eyes are the servants of the spirit, nor can the spirit be clean whose servants are dirty. So you have the theatre prohibited in the prohibition of uncleanness. If we spurn the teaching of the world's literature, as convicted of folly before God, we have a clear enough rule as to those classes of public spectacles where the world's literature is drawn upon for the comic or tragic stage. If these tragedies and comedies, bloody and lustful, impious and prodigal, teach outrage and lust, the study of what is cruel or vile is no better than itself. What in action is rejected, is not in word to be accepted.

xviii. But if you urge that the stadium is mentioned in the Scriptures,<sup>b</sup> so much I concede you. But the things done in the stadium—you will not deny that they are unfit for you to see, blow, kick, cuff, all the recklessness of the fist, any and every disfigurement of the human face, God's image. You can never approve those idle feats of running and throwing, idler still of leaping. You can never be pleased with injurious or useless displays of strength, nor with the care that develops an unnatural frame (outdoing God's handiwork). You will hate the type of man bred <sup>c</sup> to amuse the idleness of Greece. Wrestling is the devil's own trade; the devil first crushed men. Its very movements are the snake's, the grip that holds, the twist that binds,

had a very specialized diet. (Cf. Aristophanes, *Peace* 33, gobbling like a wrestler.) See E. Norman Gardiner, *Greek Athletic Sports*, p. 126. Ancient medical science condemned this high feeding.



## TERTULLIAN

Nullus tibi coronarum usus est ; quid de coronis voluptates aucuparis ?

1007] XIX. Expectabimus nunc ut et amphitheatri repudium de scripturis petamus ? Si saevitiam, si impietatem, si feritatem permissam nobis contendere possumus, eamus in amphitheatrum. Si tales sumus quales dicimur, delectemur sanguine humano. Bonum est cum puniuntur nocentes. Quis hoc nisi tamen nocens negabit ? Et tamen innocentes de supplicio alterius laetari non oportet, cum magis competat innocenti dolere, quod homo, par eius, tam nocens factus est, ut tam crudeliter impendatur. Quis autem mihi sponsor est, nocentes semper vel ad bestias vel ad quodcumque supplicium decerni, ut non innocentiae quoque inferatur aut ultione iudicantis aut infirmitate defensionis aut instantia quaestionis ? Quam melius ergo est nescire cum mali puniuntur, ne sciam et cum boni pereunt, si tamen bonum sapiunt. Certe quidem gladiatores innocentes in ludum veneunt, ut publicae voluptatis hostiae fiant. Etiam qui damnantur in ludum, quale est ut de leviori delicto in homicidas emendatione proficiant ? Sed haec ethnicis respondi. Ceterum absit ut de istius spectacula aversione diutius discat Christianus. Quamquam nemo haec omnia plenius exprimere potest nisi qui adhuc spectat. Malo non implere quam meminisse.

XX. Quam vana igitur, immo desperata argumentatio eorum, qui sine dubio tergiversatione

---

<sup>a</sup> Cf. *Apology*, 7, 8, 9, pp. 39, 45, 53.

<sup>b</sup> A postscript replying to the unspoken retort, "Then some of the Gentiles are good ?"

## DE SPECTACULIS, XVIII.—XX.

the suppleness that eludes. You have no use for garlands; why seek pleasure from garlands?

XIX. And are we to wait now for a scriptural condemnation of the amphitheatre? If we can plead that cruelty is allowed us, if impiety, if brute savagery, by all means let us go to the amphitheatre. If we are what people say we are,<sup>a</sup> let us take our delight in the blood of men. "It is a good thing, when the guilty are punished." Who will deny that, unless he is one of the guilty? And yet the innocent cannot take pleasure in the punishment of another, when it better befits the innocent to lament that a man like himself has become so guilty that a punishment so cruel must be awarded him. But who will pledge himself to me that it is always the guilty who are condemned to the beasts, or whatever the punishment, and that it is never inflicted on innocence too, through the vindictiveness of the judge it may be, the weakness of the advocate, the severity of torture? How much better then it is *not* to know when the bad are punished, that I may not have to know when the good perish—that is, if savour of good is in them at all.<sup>b</sup> Certain it is that innocent men are sold as gladiators for the show, to be victims of public pleasure. Even in the case of those condemned to the games, what can you say to the fact that punishment for the smaller offence should carry them on to murder? That is my reply to Gentiles. As for the Christian, God forbid *he* should need further teaching to hate the spectacle. No one however can fully set out the whole story here, unless he be still a spectator. I prefer to leave it incomplete than to remember.

XX. How vain, then,—yes! how desperate is the reasoning of those who, obviously to dodge the loss

## TERTULLIAN

[101] amittendae voluptatis optendunt nullam eius abstinentiae mentionem specialiter vel localiter in scripturis determinari, quae directo prohibeat eiusmodi conventibus inseri servum dei. Novam proxime defensionem suaviludii cuiusdam audiui. Sol, inquit, immo ipse etiam deus de caelo spectat nec contaminatur. Sane, sol et in cloacam radios suos defert nec inquinatur. Utinam autem deus nulla flagitia hominum spectaret, ut omnes iudicium evaderemus. Sed spectat et latrocinia, spectat et falsa et adulteria et fraudes et idololatrias et spectacula ipsa. Et idcirco ergo nos non spectabimus, ne videamur ab illo qui spectat omnia. Comparas, homo, reum et iudicem, reum, qui, quia videtur, reus est, iudicem, qui, quia videt, iudex est. Numquid ergo et extra limites circi furori studemus et extra cardines theatri impudicitiae intendimus et insolentiae extra stadium et immisericordiae extra amphitheatrum, quoniam deus etiam extra cameras et gradus et † apulias oculos habet? Erramus: nusquam et numquam excusatur quod deus damnat, nusquam et nunquam licet quod semper et ubique non licet. Haec est veritatis integritas et, quae ei debetur, disciplinae plenitudo et aequalitas timoris et fides obsequii, non inmutare sententiam nec variare iudicium. Non potest aliud esse, quod vere quidem est bonum seu malum. Omnia autem penes veritatem dei fixa sunt.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *With Oehler and Kellner I have transferred this sentence to ch. 20.*

---

<sup>a</sup> A saying of Diogenes the Cynic. See Diog. Laertius, vi. 6. 63.

## DE SPECTACULIS, xx.

of pleasure, put forward the plea that no mention of such self-denial is made in Scripture, in definite terms or definite passage, directly forbidding the servant of God to push himself into gatherings of that kind ! But the other day I heard a novel defence from one of these play-lovers. "The sun," says he, "yes! and God Himself from heaven look on, and are not defiled." Why, yes, the sun sends his rays into the sewer and is not polluted.<sup>a</sup> Would that God looked on at no sins of men, that we might all escape judgement ! But God looks on at brigandage, God looks at cheating, adultery, fraud, idolatry, yes, and the spectacles, too. And that is why we will not look at them, that we may not be seen by Him who looks on at everything. Man ! you are putting defendant and judge on one level !—the defendant who is a defendant because he is seen, the judge who because he sees is judge. Do you then really suggest that outside the circus as well as inside it we should practise frenzy ? Outside the theatre stimulate lust as well as inside ? Outside the stadium as well as inside give the rein to bad manners, to cruelty outside as well as inside the amphitheatre ? all because God has eyes outside the portico, the tier, and the curtain ? No, we are wrong ! Nowhere and never is what God condemns free from guilt. Nowhere and never is that permitted which is not permitted always and everywhere. Here is the perfection of truth—and hence the full discipline, the uniform fear, the obedient faith due to truth—here, in that it never changes its decision, never wavers in its judgement. What is good, really good, cannot be anything but good ; nor what is evil anything but evil. In God's truth all things are definite.

## TERTULLIAN

XXI. Ethnici, quos penes nulla est veritatis plenitudo, quia nec doctor veritatis deus, malum et bonum pro arbitrio et libidine interpretantur: alibi bonum quod alibi malum, et alibi malum quod alibi bonum. Sic ergo evenit, ut qui in publico vix necessitate vesicae [101<sup>v</sup>] tunicam levet, idem in circo aliter non exuat, nisi totum pudorem in faciem omnium intentet,<sup>1</sup> ut et qui filiae virginis ab omni spurco verbo aures tuetur, ipse eam in theatrum ad illas voces gesticulationesque deducat, et qui in plateis litem manu agentem aut compescit aut detestatur, idem in stadio gravioribus pugnis suffragium ferat, et qui ad cadaver hominis communi lege defuncti exhorret, idem in amphitheatro derosa et dissipata et in suo sanguine squalentia corpora patientissimis oculis desuper incumbat, immo qui propter homicidae poenam probandam ad spectaculum veniat, idem gladiatorem ad homicidium flagellis et virgis compellat invitum, et qui insigniori cuique homicidae leonem poscit, idem gladiatori atroci petat rudem et pilleum praemium conferat, illum vero confectum etiam oris spectaculo repetat, libentius recognoscens de proximo quem voluit occidere de longinquo, tanto durior, si non voluit.

XXII. Quid mirum? Inaequata ista hominum miscentium et commutantium statum boni et mali per

<sup>1</sup> *Here I have followed Oehler. The Vienna text keeps the ms. readings †exuet and intendit. One commentator writes of exuat "cave ne trahas ad tunicam cum pertineat ad vesicantf."*

## DE SPECTACULIS, XXI.—XXII.

XXI. The Gentiles have not truth in its completeness, because their teacher of truth is not God ; so they construe evil and good to square with their own judgement and pleasure ; sometimes a thing is good that at other times is bad, and the same with evil, now evil now good. So it comes about that a man who will scarcely lift his tunic in public for the necessities of nature, will take it off in the circus in such a way as to make a full display of himself before all ; that a man who guards the ears of his maiden daughter from every smutty word, will himself take her to the theatre to hear words of that sort and to see gestures to match ; that the man who when he sees a quarrel on the streets coming to blows will try to quiet it or expresses his strong disapproval, will in the stadium applaud fights far more dangerous ; that he who shudders at the body of a man who died by nature's law the common death of all, will, in the amphitheatre, gaze down with most tolerant eyes on the bodies of men mangled, torn in pieces, defiled with their own blood ; yes, and that he who comes to the spectacle to signify his approval of murder being punished, will have a reluctant gladiator hounded on with lash and rod to do murder ; that the man who calls for the lion as the punishment for some notorious murderer, will call for the rod of discharge for a savage gladiator and give him the cap of liberty as a reward, yes ! and the other man who was killed in the fight he will have fetched back to take a look at his face, with more delight inspecting under his eyes the man he wished killed at a distance ; and, if he did not wish it, so much the crueller he !

XXII. What wonder ? These are the inconsistencies of men ; it is thus they confuse and inter-

## TERTULLIAN

inconstantiam sensus et iudicii varietatem. Etenim ipsi auctores et administratores spectaculorum quadrigarios scaenicos xysticos arenarios illos amantissimos,<sup>1</sup> quibus viri animas,<sup>2</sup> feminae autem illis etiam corpora sua substernunt, propter quos se in ea committunt quae reprehendunt, ex eadem arte, qua magnificiunt, [102] deponunt et deminuunt, immo manifeste damnant ignominia et capitis minutione, arcentes curia rostris senatu equite ceterisque honoribus omnibus simul et ornamentis quibusdam. Quanta perversitas! Amant quos multant, depretiant quos probant, artem magnificant, artificem notant. Quale iudicium est, ut ob ea quis offuscetur, per quae promeretur? Immo quanta confessio est malae rei!<sup>3</sup> Quarum auctores, cum acceptissimi sint, sine nota non sunt.

XXIII. Cum igitur humana recordatio etiam obstrepente gratia voluptatis damnandos eos censeat ademptis bonis dignitatum in quendam scopulum famositatis, quanto magis divina iustitia in eiusmodi artifices animadvertit? An deo placebit auriga ille tot animarum inquietator, tot furiarum minister, tot statuum,<sup>4</sup> ut sacerdos coronatus vel coloratus ut leno, quem curru rapiendum diabolus adversus Elian exornavit? Placebit et ille, qui voltus suos novacula mutat, infidelis erga faciem suam, quam non contentus

<sup>1</sup> *An almost unintelligible description, but the correction amentissimos hardly betters it.*

<sup>2</sup> *The mss. and editors offer many confusing variants here; the text of Oehler and Reifferscheid is at least construable.*

<sup>3</sup> *Here again the text is wrong: Oehler corrects it to malarum rerum: the Vienna text again has actores,*

<sup>4</sup> *The Vienna text prints tot \* \* status,*

change the nature of good and evil, swayed by the fickleness of feeling, the wavering of judgement. Take even those who give and who administer the spectacles ; look at their attitude to the charioteers, players, athletes, gladiators, most loving of men, to whom men surrender their souls and women their bodies as well, for whose sake they commit the sins they blame ; on one and the same account they glorify them and they degrade and diminish them ; yes, further, they openly condemn them to disgrace and civil degradation ; they keep them religiously excluded from council chamber, rostrum, senate, knighthood, and every other kind of office and a good many distinctions. The perversity of it ! They love whom they lower ; they despise whom they approve ; the art they glorify, the artist they disgrace. What sort of judgement is this—that a man should be blackened for what he shines in ? Yes, and what a confession that things are evil, when their authors at the top of their popularity are in disgrace !

XXIII. Since then human reflection, in spite of the clamour and the appeal of pleasure, sentences these people to forfeit everything of dignity, to be banished as it were to some island rock of infamy, how much more will divine justice punish those who practise such acts ? Will God be pleased with the charioteer, who disquiets so many souls of men, who ministers to such madness, such changes of temper, crowned like a priest, coloured like a pimp, a devil's parody of Elijah swept away in his chariot ? Will God be pleased with the man who changes his features with a razor, faithless to his face—which, not content with remodelling it now after Saturn, now Isis



## TERTULLIAN

Saturno et Isidi et Libero proximam facere insuper contumeliis alaparum sic obicit, tamquam de praecepto domini ludat? Docet scilicet et diabolus verberandam maxillam patienter offerre. Sic et tragoe-dos cothurnis extulit, quia "nemo potest adicere cubi-tum unum ad staturam suam": mendacem facere vult Christum. Iam vero ipsum opus personarum quaero an deo placeat, qui omnem similitudinem vetat fieri, [1027] quanto magis imaginis suae? Non amat falsum auctor veritatis; adulterium est apud illum omne quod fingitur. Proinde vocem sexus aetates mentien-tem, amores iras gemitus lacrimas asseverantem non probabit: omnem enim hypocrisin damnat. Ceterum cum in lege praescribit maledictum esse qui mulie-bribus vestietur, quid de pantomimo iudicabit, qui etiam muliebribus curvatur<sup>1</sup>? Sane et ille artifex pugnorum impunitus ibit? Tales enim cicatrices caestuum et callos pugnorum et aurium fungos a deo cum plasmaretur accepit; ideo illi oculos deus com-modavit, ut vapulando deficient. Taceo de illo, qui hominem leoni prae se opponit, ne parum sit homicida qui eundem postmodum iugulat.

XXIV. Quot adhuc modis probavimus, nihil ex his quae spectaculis deputantur placitum deo esse! At congruens servo dei quod deo placitum non sit? Si

<sup>1</sup> *The ms. has cu . . . ur: Oehler prints curatur; the trans-lation follows his explanation, but seems dubious.*

<sup>a</sup> Matt. vi. 27, Luke xii. 25.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. xxii. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Heavy boxing-glove, cf. Virgil, *Aen.* v. 400 ff.

<sup>d</sup> The old explanation, for what it is worth, is that, while gladiators are ready to fight, a lion is let loose on them. One pushes the other in the lion's way to save himself; this second man kills the lion and is afterwards killed by the first who, if he only kills him once in fact, did it twice in inten-

## DE SPECTACULIS, XXIII.—XXIV.

or Bacchus, on top of that he offers to the indignity of slap and buffet, as in travesty of the Lord's commandment? Oh! yes, the devil, sure enough, teaches to offer the cheek with all patience to the blow! In the same way the devil makes the tragic actor taller on his *cothurni*, because "nobody can add a cubit to his stature"<sup>a</sup>; he wants to make a liar of Christ. And then all this business of masks, I ask if God can be pleased with it, who forbids the likeness of anything to be made, how much more of His own image? The Author of truth loves no falsehood; all that is feigned is adultery in His sight. The man who counterfeits voice, sex or age, who makes a show of false love and hate, false sighs and tears, He will not approve, for He condemns all hypocrisy. In His law<sup>b</sup> He denounces that man as accursed who shall go dressed in women's clothes; what then will be His judgement upon the pantomime who is trained to play the woman? And that artist in fisticuffs, will he go unpunished? That cicatrice of the caestus,<sup>c</sup> that scar of the fist, that thick ear—he got them from God, did he? When God fashioned him? And God, no doubt, lent him eyes to have them blinded in boxing. I say nothing of him who pushes another in front of himself to the lion—in case he is not quite murderer enough when he cuts his throat afterwards.<sup>d</sup>

XXIV. How many lines of argument have we pursued to show that nothing connected with the games pleases God? But does a thing befit the servant of God, which does not please his Master? If we

tion. The Vienna text keeps a *quam* before *qui*, which one would suppose to involve three men; more confusion and a certain flatness and lack of point.

## TERTULLIAN

omnia propter diabolum instituta et ex diaboli rebus instructa monstravimus (nihil enim non diaboli est quicquid dei non est vel deo displicet), hoc erit pompa diaboli, adversus quem in signaculo fidei eieramus. Quod autem eieramus, neque facto neque dicto neque visu neque conspectu participare debemus. Ceterum sic nos eieramus et rescindimus signaculum rescindendo testationem eius. Numquid ergo superest, ut ab ipsis ethnicis responsum flagitemus? Illi nobis iam renuntient, an liceat Christianis spectaculo uti.

[103] Atquin hinc vel maxime intelligunt factum Christianum, de repudio spectaculorum. Itaque negat manifeste qui per quod agnoscitur tollit. Quid autem spei superest in eiusmodi homine? Nemo in castra hostium transit nisi proiectis armis suis, nisi destitutis signis et sacramentis principis sui, nisi pactus simul perire.

XXV. An ille recogitabit eo tempore de deo positus illic ubi nihil est de deo? Pacem, opinor, habebit in animo contendens pro auriga, pudicitiam ediscet attonitus in mimos. Immo in omni spectaculo nullum magis scandalum occurret quam ille ipse mulierum et virorum accuratior cultus. Ipsa consensus, ipsa in favoribus aut conspiratio aut dissensio inter se de commercio scintillas libidinum conflabelant. Nemo denique in spectaculo ineundo prius cogitat nisi videri et videre. Sed tragoedo vociferante

288

have established our point that the spectacles one and all were instituted for the devil's sake, and equipped from the devil's stores (for the devil owns everything that is not God's or does not please God), why, here you have that "pomp of the devil" that we renounce when we receive the "seal" of faith. But what we renounce, we have no business to share, be it in deed or word, sight or anticipation. But by such acts we really renounce and unseal the "seal," by unsealing our witness to it. Does it remain for us to ask the heathen for an answer to our question? Let them inform us, whether a Christian may go to the spectacles. Why, it is above all things from this that they understand a man to have become a Christian, that he will have nothing more to do with games! So he openly "denies," who gets rid of the distinctive mark by which he is known. What hope is left for such a man? No man deserts to the enemy's camp, but he throws away his arms, but he deserts his standards, but he breaks his oath of allegiance to his prince, but he pledges himself to death with the enemy to whom he deserts.

XXV. Do you think that, seated where there is nothing of God, he will at that moment turn his thoughts to God? Peace of soul will be his, I take it, as he shouts for the charioteer? With his mind on the actors, he will learn purity? No, in all the show there will be nothing more sure to trip him up than the mere over-nice attire of women and men. That sharing of emotions, that agreement, or disagreement in backing their favourites, makes an intercourse that fans the sparks of lust. Why, nobody going to the games thinks of anything else but seeing and being seen. But while the tragic actor

## TERTULLIAN

exclamationes ille alicuius prophetae retractabit et inter effeminati tibicinis modos psalmum secum commiscetur, et cum athletae agent, ille dicturus est reperiendum non esse. Poterit ergo et de misericordia moneri defixus in morsus ursorum et spongas retiariorum. Avertat deus a suis tantam voluptatis exitiosae cupiditatem! Quale est enim ~~de~~ ecclesia dei in diaboli ecclesiam tendere, de caelo, quod aiunt, in caenum? Illas manus quas ad deum extuleris postmodum laudando histrionem fatigare? Ex ore, quo Amen in Sanctum protuleris, gladiatori testimonium reddere, εἰς αἰῶνας ἀπ' αἰῶνος alii omnino dicere nisi deo et Christo?

103"] XXVI. Cur ergo non eiusmodi etiam daemoniis penetrabiles fiant? Nam et exemplum accidit domino teste eius mulieris, quae theatrum adiit et inde cum daemonio rediit. Itaque in exorcismo cum oneraretur immundus spiritus, quod ausus esset fidelem aggredi, constanter: "et iustissime quidem," inquit, "feci: in meo eam inveni." Constat et alii linteum in somnis ostensum eius diei nocte, qua tragoedum audierat, cum exprobratione nominato tragoedo nec ultra quintum diem eam mulierem in saeculo fuisse. Quot<sup>1</sup> utique et alia documenta cesserunt de his qui cum diabolo apud spectacula communicando a domino exciderunt. "Nemo enim potest duobus dominis servire." "Quid luci cum tenebris? Quid vitae et morti?"

<sup>1</sup> *The Vienna editors read quo.*

---

<sup>a</sup> The explanations of this phrase seem to be guess-work. "Sponge-nets" is one; *die zusammengerollten Netze*, another.

<sup>b</sup> This happy turn is from Dodgson's version (1842).

<sup>c</sup> The *Amen* was said as the sacrament was received.

<sup>d</sup> Matt. vi. 24.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 14.

## DE SPECTACULIS, xxv.—xxvi.

declaims, he will think of the crying aloud of one of the prophets ! Amid the strains of some effeminate flute-player, he will muse in himself upon a psalm ! When the athletes are at work, he will say that blow for blow is forbidden ! Then he surely can be stirred by pity, with his eyes fastened on the bear as it bites, on the squeezed nets <sup>a</sup> of the net-fighter ! May God avert from His own such a passion for murderous pleasure ! For what sort of conduct is it to go from the assembly of God to the assembly of the devil ? from sky to sty<sup>e</sup>,<sup>b</sup> as the proverb has it ? those hands you have uplifted to God, to tire them out clapping an actor ? with those lips, with which you have uttered *Amen* over the Holy Thing,<sup>c</sup> to cheer for a gladiator ? to say *for ever and ever* to any other whatever but to God and Christ ?

XXVI. What is to save such people from demon-possession ? For we have in fact the case (and the Lord is witness) of that woman, who went to the theatre and returned devil-possessed. So, when the unclean spirit was being exorcised and was pressed with the accusation that he had dared to enter a woman who believed ; “ and I was quite right, too,” said he boldly ; “ for I found her on my own ground.” It is credibly affirmed, too, that to another woman, on the night following a day when she had listened to a tragic actor, a linen sheet was shown in a dream, the actor was named, and she was rebuked ; nor was that woman alive in the world five days later. How many other proofs indeed can be drawn from those, who, by communion with the devil in the shows, have fallen from the Lord ? “ For no man can serve two masters.”<sup>d</sup> “ What has light to do with darkness ? What have life and death in common ? ”<sup>e</sup>

## TERTULLIAN

XXVII. Odisse debemus istos conventus et coetus ethnicorum, vel quod illic nomen dei blasphematur, illic in nos quotidiani leones expostulantur, inde persecutiones decernuntur, inde temptationes emittuntur. Quid facies in illo suffragiorum impiorum aestuario reprehensus? Non quasi aliquid illic pati possis ab hominibus (nemo te cognoscit Christianum), sed recogita, quid de te fiat in caelo. Dubitas illo enim momento, quo diabolus in ecclesia<sup>1</sup> furit, omnes angelos prospicere de caelo et singulos denotare, quis blasphemiam dixerit, quis audierit, quis linguam, quis aures diabolo adversus deum ministraverit? Non ergo fugies sedilia hostium Christi, illam cathedram pestilentiarum ipsumque aerem qui  
 [104] desuper incubat scelestis vocibus conspurcatum? Sint dulcia licebit et grata et simplicia, etiam honesta quaedam. Nemo venenum temperat felle et elleboro, sed conditis pulmentis et bene saporatis, et plurimum dulcibus id mali inicit. Ita et diabolus letale quod conficit rebus dei gratissimis et acceptissimis imbuit. Omnia illic seu fortia seu honesta seu sonora seu canora seu subtilia perinde habe ac stillicidia mellis de lucunculo venenato nec tanti gulam facias voluptatis quanti periculum per suavitatem.

XXVIII. Saginentur eiusmodi dulcibus convivae sui: et loca et tempora et invitator ipsorum est. Nostrae coenae, nostrae nuptiae nondum sunt. Non

<sup>1</sup> *The Vienna editors read in ecclesiam—"the devil is raging against the church"; but the scene seems to require the devil's ecclesia, cf. the previous chapter.*

---

<sup>a</sup> *Cf. Apology, chapter 40, p. 183.*

## DE SPECTACULIS, XXVII.—XXVIII.

XXVII. It is our duty to hate these assemblies and gatherings of the heathen, were it only that there the name of God is blasphemed; that there, every day, the shout is raised to set the lion upon us<sup>a</sup>; that from there persecution begins; that there temptation has its base. What will you do when you are caught in that heaving tide of guilty voices? I do not suggest that you can run any risk there of suffering from men—nobody recognizes you for a Christian; but think well over it, what it means for you in heaven. Do you doubt but that at that very moment when the devil is raging in his assembly, all the angels look forth from heaven, and mark down man by man, how this one has spoken blasphemy and that has listened, the one has lent his tongue, the other his ears, to the devil, against God? Will you not rather fly the chairs of the enemies of Christ, “the seat of the pestilences,” the very overhanging air defiled with sinful cries? Granted that you have there something that is sweet, agreeable and innocent, some things that are excellent. No one mixes poison with gall and hellebore; no, it is into delicacies well made, well flavoured, and, for the most part, sweet things, that he drops the venom. So does the devil; the deadly draught he brews, he flavours with the most agreeable, the most welcome gifts of God. So count all you find there—brave and honest, resounding, musical, exquisite,—as so much honey dropping from a poisoned bit of pastry; and do not count your appetite for the pleasure worth the risk in the sweetness.

XXVIII. Let his own guests batten on sweets of that sort. The place, the time, the host who invites, are theirs. Our feast, our marriage-festival, is not



## TERTULLIAN

possumus cum illis discumbere, quia nec illi nobiscum : vicibus disposita res est. Nunc illi laetantur, nos conflictamur. "Saeculum," inquit, "gaudebit, vos tristes eritis." Lugeamus ergo, dum ethnici gaudent, ut, quum lugere coeperint, gaudeamus, ne pariter nunc gaudentes tunc quoque pariter lugeamus. Delicatus es, Christiane, si et in saeculo voluptatem concupiscis, immo nimium stultus, si hoc existimas voluptatem. Philosophi quidam hoc nomen quieti et tranquillitati dederunt, in ea gaudent, in ea avocantur, in ea etiam gloriantur. Tu mihi metas et scaenam et pulverem et harenam suspiras. Dicas velim : non possumus vivere sine voluptate, qui mori cum voluptate debemus? Nam quod est aliud votum nostrum quam quod et apostoli, exire de saeculo et recipi apud dominum? Hic voluptas, ubi et votum.

XXIX. Iam nunc si<sup>1</sup> putas delectamentis exigere spatium hoc, cur tam ingratus es, ut tot et tales voluptates a deo contributas tibi satis non habeas neque recognoscas? Quid enim iucundius quam dei patris et domini reconciliatio, quam veritatis revelatio, quam errorum recognitio, quam tantorum retro criminum venia? Quae maior voluptas quam fastidium ipsius voluptatis, quam saeculi totius contemptus, quam vera libertas, quam conscientia integra, quam vita sufficiens, quam mortis timor nullus? Quod calcas deos nationum, quod daemonia expellis, quod medicinas facis, quod revelationes petis, quod

<sup>1</sup> si omitted by Vienna editors.

<sup>a</sup> John xvi. 20.

<sup>b</sup> Philippians, i. 23.

## DE SPECTACULIS, XXVIII.—XXIX.

yet. We cannot take our place at table with them, because they cannot with us. It is a matter of turn and turn about. Now they are happy, and we are afflicted. "The world," it says, "will rejoice; you will be sad."<sup>a</sup> Then let us mourn while the heathen rejoice, that, when they have begun to mourn, we may rejoice; lest, if we share their joy now, then we may be sharing their mourning too. You are too dainty, O Christian, if you long for pleasure in this world as well as the other—a bit of a fool into the bargain, if you think *this* pleasure. Philosophers have given the name "pleasure" to quiet and tranquillity; in it they rejoice, take their ease in it, yes, glory in it. And you—why, I find you sighing for goal-posts, the stage, the dust, the arena. I wish you would tell me; cannot we live without pleasure, who must die with pleasure? For what else is our prayer but that of the apostle "to leave the world and be at home with the Lord"?<sup>b</sup> Our pleasure is where our prayer is.

XXIX. But now, if you think we are to pass this interval of life here in delights, why are you so ungrateful as not to find enough in the great pleasures, the many pleasures, given you by God, and not to recognize them? What has more joy in it than reconciliation with God, the Father and Lord, than the revelation of truth, the recognition of error, and forgiveness for all the great sins of the past? What greater pleasure is there than disdain for pleasure, than contempt for the whole world, than true liberty, than a clean conscience, than life sufficient, than the absence of all fear of death? than to find yourself trampling underfoot the gods of the Gentiles, expelling demons, effecting cures, seeking revelations,

## TERTULLIAN

deo vivis ? Haec voluptates, haec spectacula Christianorum sancta perpetua gratuita ; in his tibi circenses ludos interpretare, cursus saeculi intueri, tempora labentia, spatia peracta dinumera, metas consummationis exspecta, societates ecclesiarum defende, ad signum dei suscitare, ad tubam angeli erigere, ad martyrum palmas gloriari. Si scaenicae doctrinae delectant, satis nobis litterarum est, satis versuum est, satis sententiarum, satis etiam canticorum, satis vocum, nec fabulae, sed veritates, nec strophae, sed simplicitates. Vis et pugilatus et luctatus ? praesto sunt, non parva et multa. Aspice impudicitiam delectam a castitate, perfidiam caesam a fide, saevitiam a misericordia contusam, petulantiam a modestia adumbratam, et tales sunt apud nos agones, in quibus ipsi coronamur. Vis autem et sanguinis aliquid ? Habes Christi.

XXX. Quale autem spectaculum in proximo est adventus domini iam indubitati, iam superbi, iam triumphantis ! Quae illa exultatio angelorum, quae gloria resurgentium sanctorum ! Quale regnum exinde iustorum ! Qualis civitas nova Hierusalem ! At enim supersunt alia spectacula, ille ultimus et perpetuus iudicii dies, ille nationibus insperatus, ille derisus, cum tanta saeculi vetustas et tot eius nativitates uno igni haurientur. Quae tunc spectacula latitudo ! Quid

<sup>a</sup> A play on words, hard to render ; *strophae* means alternate passages in a choric ode, but also tricks in common life.

<sup>b</sup> Prudentius may have taken from here the hint for his *Psychomachia* (his *Holy War*), the most widely read and imitated of his works in the Middle Ages, of which he was one of the most popular authors. He was clearly a student of Tertullian, as we can see in poem after poem.

## DE SPECTACULIS, XXIX.—XXX.

living to God? These are the pleasures, the spectacles of Christians, holy, eternal, and free. Here find your games of the circus,—watch the race of time, the seasons slipping by, count the circuits, look for the goal of the great consummation, battle for the companies of the churches, rouse up at the signal of God, stand erect at the angel's trump, triumph in the palms of martyrdom. If the literature of the stage delight you, we have sufficiency of books, of poems, of aphorisms, sufficiency of songs and voices, not fable, those of ours, but truth; not artifice but simplicity.<sup>a</sup> Would you have fightings and wrestlings? Here they are—things of no small account and plenty of them. See impurity overthrown by chastity, perfidy slain by faith, cruelty crushed by pity, impudence thrown into the shade by modesty; and such are the contests among us, and in them we are crowned.<sup>b</sup> Have you a mind for blood? You have the blood of Christ.

XXX. But what a spectacle is already at hand—the return of the Lord, now no object of doubt, now exalted, now triumphant! What exultation will that be of the angels, what glory that of the saints as they rise again! What the reign of the righteous thereafter! What a city, the New Jerusalem! Yes, and there are still to come other spectacles—that last, that eternal Day of Judgement, that Day which the Gentiles never believed would come, that Day they laughed at, when this old world and all its generations shall be consumed in one fire.<sup>c</sup> How vast the spectacle that day, and how wide! What sight shall

<sup>a</sup> Here again think of Prudentius and his hymn of the Second Coming, *Cathemerinon*, xi. 101-112.

## TERTULLIAN

admirer? Quid rideam? Ubi gaudeam, ubi exultem, tot spectans reges, qui in caelum recepti nuntiabantur, cum Iove ipso et ipsis suis testibus in imis tenebris congemescentes? Item praesides persecutores dominici nominis saevioribus quam ipsi flammis saevierunt insultantes contra Christianos liquescentes? Quos praeterea? Sapientes illos philosophos coram discipulis suis una conflagrantibus erubescences, quibus nihil ad deum pertinere suadebant, quibus animas aut  
 [105] nullas aut non in pristina corpora redituras adfirmabant? Etiam poetas non ad Rhadamanthi nec ad Minonis, sed ad inopinati Christi tribunal palpitantes? Tunc magis tragoedi audiendi, magis scilicet vocales in sua propria calamitate; tunc histriones cognoscendi, solutiores multo per ignem; tunc spectandus auriga in flammea rota totus ruber; tunc xystici contemplandi, non in gymnasiis, sed in igne . . . iaculati, nisi quod ne tunc quidem illos velim visos, ut qui malim ad eos potius conspectum insatiabilem conferre, qui in dominum desaevierunt. Hic est ille, dicam, fabri aut quaestuariae filius, sabbati destructor, Samarites et daemonium habens; hic est quem a Iuda redemistis, hic est ille harundine et colaphis diverberatus, sputamentis dedecoratus, felle et aceto potatus; hic est, quem clam discentes subriperunt, ut surrexisse dicatur, vel hortulanus detraxit, ne lactucae suae frequentia commeantium adlaederentur. Ut talia spectes, ut talibus exultes,

---

<sup>a</sup> A piece of Jewish polemic.

## DE SPECTACULIS, xxx.

wake my wonder, what my laughter, my joy and exultation? as I see all those kings, those great kings, welcomed (we were told) in heaven, along with Jove, along with those who told of their ascent, groaning in the depths of darkness! And the magistrates who persecuted the name of Jesus, liquefying in fiercer flames than they kindled in their rage against the Christians! those sages, too, the philosophers blushing before their disciples as they blaze together, the disciples whom they taught that God was concerned with nothing, that men have no souls at all, or that what souls they have shall never return to their former bodies! And, then, the poets trembling before the judgement-seat, not of Rhadamanthus, not of Minos, but of Christ whom they never looked to see! And then there will be the tragic actors to be heard, more vocal in their own tragedy; and the players to be seen, lither of limb by far in the fire; and then the charioteer to watch, red all over in the wheel of flame; and, next, the athletes to be gazed upon, not in their gymnasiums but hurled in the fire—unless it be that not even then would I wish to see them, in my desire rather to turn an insatiable gaze on them who vented their rage and fury on the Lord. “This is he,” I shall say, “the son of the carpenter or the harlot,” the Sabbath-breaker, the Samaritan, who had a devil. This is he whom you bought from Judas; this is he, who was struck with reed and fist, defiled with spittle, given gall and vinegar to drink. This is he whom the disciples secretly stole away, that it might be said he had risen—unless it was the gardener who removed him, lest his lettuces should be trampled by the throng of visitors!” Such sights, such exultation,—what

## TERTULLIAN

quis tibi praetor aut consul aut quaestor aut sacerdos de sua liberalitate praestabit? Et tamen haec iam quodammodo habemus per fidem spiritu imaginante repraesentata. Ceterum qualia illa sunt, quae nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascenderunt? Credo, circo et utraque cavea et omni stadio gratiora.

## DE SPECTACULIS, xxx.

praetor, consul, quaestor, priest, will ever give you of his bounty ? And yet all these, in some sort, are ours, pictured through faith in the imagination of the spirit. But what are those things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor ever entered into the heart of man ? <sup>a</sup> I believe, things of greater joy than circus, theatre or amphitheatre, or any stadium.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 9.





MINUCIUS FELIX

## INTRODUCTION

THE *Octavius* survives only in a single manuscript, preserved by the happy accident of being mistaken for Book VIII of Arnobius *Adversus Nationes*. This association is an interesting addition to the links connecting it with Roman Africa. The work has always been coupled with the name of M. Minucius Felix, who figures in it as a busy and successful advocate practising at Rome, disqualified for office by his adoption of the Christian faith. The writer was a fluent and well-read man of culture, drawing freely upon Lucretius, Virgil and Ovid, and a practised rhetorician intimately familiar with Cicero and Seneca. Apart from later literary links with Arnobius and Lactantius, who come from Africa, the affinities, in subject matter and treatment, with Tertullian (and even Cyprian) are very close; but the scenery and atmosphere and colour are drawn from cosmopolitan Rome, and style and vocabulary adhere to the tradition of Cicero and Seneca, and shun the forced and exotic mannerisms of Fronto or Tertullian.

The distinctive interest of the *Octavius* lies in the picture which it supplies of the social and religious conditions at Rome at the end of the second century, and among these the interactions between Roman and African Christianity form an instructive feature.

The three *dramatis personae* are representative—

## INTRODUCTION

M. Minucius Felix, the author, professes to recount his recollection of a debate that took place between his two friends Octavius Januarius and Q. Caecilius Natalis, on the validity and merits of Pagan and Christian beliefs. That Minucius Felix was an actual person, a distinguished advocate at Rome, is assumed by Lactantius (*Inst. Div.* v. 1. 21) and by Jerome, though neither adds anything that might not be inferred directly from the Dialogue; Jerome had also seen a *De Fato* ascribed to his hand, but on grounds of style was disposed to question its authenticity; and it may have been a fictitious substitute for the work contemplated in § 36.

Real or dramatic, the writer represents the cultured and professional classes of the metropolis, and his work marks the advance gained by Christianity in social and civic status. It was no longer limited to the underworld of the submerged, the servile and the illiterate, won by the apostolic zeal of missionary aliens. It was not constrained to adopt, with Justin, the language of "Apology" and humbly plead for hearing. It was strong enough, with Tertullian, to carry the anti-Pagan offensive into the enemy's lines—*Adversus Gentes*.<sup>a</sup> It had become the movement of reform, of intellectual and moral protest. Already the tables were turned; to men of culture and refinement Paganism was bankrupt. As a system of thought it was obsolete, it had ceased to be rational: as a bond of citizenship, or as a social discipline, all virtue had gone out of it. Religion, alike in mythology and ritual, had more and more become a rubbish or refuse heap of waste products, a storehouse for discarded relics of barbarism and of super-

<sup>a</sup> Part of the title of Tertullian's *Apology*.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

stitution. Polytheism, in its cosmopolitan developments, passed sentence on itself. In its attempted amalgamation of deities, syncretism, so far from reconciling, renovating and preserving, ensured and accelerated the common extinction of all. The Pagan Pantheon was a museum of dead mummies, possessed of little more than archaeological interest.

The second of the trio is Octavius Januarius, who is cast for the rôle of chief speaker, and champion of Christian religion. He is represented as already dead, and the discourse is a tribute to his gifts and memory. In determining the date, the *reminiscent* setting is of some importance, as it implies that the dramatic date precedes that of publication, and may here and there cover minor divergences in the situation depicted. Octavius had been brought up in the Pagan tradition, and while in training for their profession had made Minucius his bosom friend and confidant. As experience matured, intellectual and moral considerations combined to produce a revolt against Paganism, and in transferring his allegiance to Christianity he had led the way. As was so common with young Romans of means and enterprise, he had sought his fortunes in the provinces, and had settled down with wife and family in Roman Africa, perhaps at Cirta itself. Change of surroundings had only served to strengthen his convictions, and he now felt it incumbent on any high-minded man to warn his friends against even outward compliance with the demoralizing conventions of Pagan belief. When Caecilius kissed his hand to the image of Serapis, he felt bound to utter his protest, and the discourse claims to reproduce the debate that arose out of the incident.

## INTRODUCTION

Q. Caecilius Natalis represents current Paganism in its impotent decline. The name actually occurs in inscriptions found at Cirta, and it is far from improbable that the magistrate who bore it in A.D. 210 is the actual person who takes part in the dialogue. The date agrees well with the belief that the composition may well be assigned to the opening of the third century, and derives its materials from Tertullian's *Apology*, issued in A.D. 197. Caecilius in § 13 associates himself with the later Academic school, agnostic in outlook, acquiescing in the superstitions of the illiterate multitude, while professing polite but sceptical interest in the speculations and contradictions of rival philosophies. The discourse represents him as won for Christianity by the earnestness, the eloquence and charm of his friend Octavius.

The setting, modelled on Ciceronian prefaces, borrowed from precedents of Plato, is gracefully elaborated: it would be hard to find anything better of its kind in Latin literature. The scene is aptly laid at Ostia, where at some 12 miles from the capital the Tiber falls into the sea. The seaport of the capital had become the receiving-house for the transmarine religions of the East. The dialogue takes the shrine and image of Serapis for its text; the archaeologist has located a temple of the Great Mother, and at least four sanctuaries of Mithra: in one the old Roman Silvanus occupied a niche, while in another Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus were figured among Eastern symbols of the planets and signs of the Zodiac; and the absence of references to Mithra worship, both here and in the *Apology* of Tertullian, is remarkable. Ostia, the meeting-ground of faiths and home of syncretism, was also a

## MINUCIUS FELIX

favourite health-resort; and thither, in the heats of vintage time, when the law-courts were in vacation, the three friends had repaired to enjoy the benefits of sea breezes and the saline baths. The walk beside the river-bank, the beach, the boats hauled up upon their baulks, the breakwater of piled rocks, the touches of Theocritean naturalism in the play of waves on paddling feet, and the eager boys competing at their "ducks and drakes" are admirably rendered.

The conduct of the case is on forensic lines throughout, speeches for the prosecution and defence, addressed to Minucius as presiding arbiter, filled with rhetorical appeal, but not subjected to cross-examination, or to the tests of evidence or dialectical debate. Caecilius prefaces his brief for Paganism with philosophic commonplaces on the precarious results of reasoning processes, and on the drawn battle between the upholders of providence, of chance, and of Fate (fixed law or destiny) in the ordering of the universe (§ 5). None holds the field; and in the absence of authority and proof, tradition and history are entitled to the casting vote. Religion rests on the accumulated wisdom of forefathers, and every nation, tribe and city contribute added sanctions to its support (§ 6). To Rome in particular religious beliefs, rites and observances—the gods of Rome—have brought world-wide dominion and pre-eminence. The Roman Empire is the standing evidence of the truth of religion (§ 7). If the profession of atheism has brought disaster upon trained thinkers and philosophers, what presumption it is for a horde of low-born and illiterate sectaries to blaspheme and to deny! (§ 8). He then proceeds to rehearse, and with

308

## INTRODUCTION

circumstantial gusto to embroider, the malicious charges circulated against Christians<sup>a</sup>—tales of sacramental feeding upon human flesh and blood, of Thyestean rites of initiation and the death of new-born children, of love-feast orgies, of promiscuous intercourse between “brothers” and “sisters,” of worship of a crucified malefactor sometimes with an ass’s head, of secret and obscene rites that shunned the light of day (§ 9). He goes on to denounce the sour and anti-social attitude of Christians towards all forms of ceremonial festivity, their abstinence from galas of public rejoicing, their carping reprobation of the theatre, the circus and the games (§ 12). On the strength of ridiculous beliefs about a future life, they not only bring delusions, misery and detestation upon themselves, but become the enemies of good fellowship and the kill-joys of all wholesome *joie de vivre* (§§ 11-13).

After a short interlude (§§ 14-15), which gives Minucius an opportunity for displaying his judicial acumen upon the rules of evidence, and the relation of rhetoric to dialectic, Octavius plunges eagerly into the defence. The way has been prepared for an easy victory. Caecilius, he observes, has throughout adopted a negative and non-committal attitude: he has raised certain pleas and difficulties, but has brought no proofs in defence of the validity or coherence of polytheistic beliefs. This inconsistency is due (he feels sure) not to wilful sophistry, but to the inherent conditions of his case. It invites, and must abide, the question: reason is man’s prerogative; and even the poor and simple-minded must

<sup>a</sup> The calumnies are almost all derived from Tertullian’s *Apology*, not from first-hand observation.



## MINUCIUS FELIX

pass judgement according to their conscience and ability (§ 16).

The following chapters (§§ 17-19) contain a long and rhetorical exposition of the argument from design, drawn largely from Cicero *De Natura Deorum*, and Seneca ; and §§ 20-24 discuss on similar lines the origin of gods in folk-lore, myth, poetry and hero-worship, with copious illustrations of the barbarous, grotesque, irrational, degrading and obscene elements preserved in mythology, cult and forms of worship. In rebutting the appeal to history, the author takes a more independent line. The argument, he shows, cuts both ways. Great empires, under other auspices and gods, preceded and rivalled that of Rome, and on the other hand the nations subjected by Rome had gods whom Rome herself appropriated and admitted to an equal franchise with her own. Gods of the conquered enjoy a vogue greater than those of the conqueror. Indeed, the indigenous gods and rituals have poorer credentials and a sway inferior to those of Greece, Phrygia, Syria and Egypt. The attack on divine origins is carried into the field of history—the foundation of the city as an asylum for vagabonds and criminals, the rape of the Sabine women, and the successive episodes of violence, bad faith and sacrilege, by which the Empire had been built up. Throughout, the anti-patriotic note is surprisingly shrill, even on the lips of a provincial. It must belong to a period, or district, in which the terrors of persecution were in abeyance, and it helps to account for the distrust and animosity with which later emperors and officials regarded Christian aims and propaganda.

The inconclusive evidence of auguries and auspices

## MINUCIUS FELIX

in God and their conception of his attributes, with special stress upon belief in immortality, in the approaching end of the world, and in retribution upon the wicked (§§ 31-35). There are telling passages upon God's appreciation of the Christian wrestler and confessor, but nothing that in spiritual simplicity and conviction can quite compare with the *Letter to Diognetus* (§§ 36-38).<sup>a</sup>

The chief lack lies on the constructive and doctrinal side of Christianity. The doctrine of God is approached from familiar Romanized forms of Platonic, Stoic and Epicurean theism. There is no Christology; even the name of Jesus Christ does not once occur: the charge of superstitious reverence for the Cross is met by far-reaching disclaimer, and by the contentions that the crucified was not a malefactor, and the cross itself a common emblem on Roman banners and in a great variety of symbolic representations (§ 29). Quotations from the New Testament Scriptures are rare, and their note is either ethical or theistic. Belief in resurrection and immortality is not grounded on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pauline interpretations of the person of Christ, of atonement, of justification, of mystical union with the believer, have left no trace, nor any of their subsequent developments in Greek theologians or the Apologists of the second century. There is no doctrine of the Holy Spirit; scant reference to the religion of experience, and virtually none to institutional Church Order of ministry or sacraments. Thus the treatise does not voice the deeper impulses of Christian motive and belief so much as the reactions produced on Pagan culture by the moral

<sup>a</sup> Usually ascribed to the middle of the second century.

## INTRODUCTION

standards and convictions upheld by Christianity, It is the work of a trained rhetorician, a product of the Roman schools of rhetoric and law, which flourished in the Antonine and post-Antonine age, and which we associate with the names of a Celsus and a Fronto, as scornful assailants of the Christian propaganda ; its primary value lies in revealing the forces and the processes by which outworn tradition succumbed before the protests of a living faith.

The Latin text of the *Octavius* is based on a single manuscript transcribed by a very illiterate copyist, and fortuitously attached to the *Adversus Gentes* of Arnobius. Since its discovery in 1543 it has been a favourite playground for corrections and emendations, scattered through many editions, monographs, and learned transactions and periodicals. By the generous and valued permission of the editors, we are allowed to print the text prepared by J. P. Waltzing for the Teubner series of Greek and Roman writers. Not only does it provide the standard text, but for every student of the subject, that edition, with its admirable equipment of bibliography, indices, critical apparatus, literary sources, parallels and illustrations, is indispensable.

## M. MINUCHI FELICIS : OCTAVIUS

- 1 I. Cogitanti mihi et cum animo meo Octavi boni et  
fidelissimi contubernalis memoriam recensenti tanta  
dulcedo et adfectio hominis inhaesit, ut ipse quodam-  
modo mihi viderer in praeterita redire, non ea quae  
iam transacta et decursa sunt, recordatione revocare :  
2 ita eius contemplatio quantum subtracta est oculis,  
tantum pectori meo ac paene intimis sensibus in-  
3 plicata est. Nec inmerito discedens vir eximius  
et sanctus inmensum sui desiderium nobis reliquit,  
utpote cum et ipse tanto nostri semper amore flagra-  
verit, ut et in ludicris et seriis pari mecum voluntate  
concineret eadem velle vel nolle : crederes unam  
4 mentem in duobus fuisse divisam. Sic solus in  
amoribus conscius, ipse socius in erroribus : et cum  
discussa caligine de tenebrarum profundo in lucem  
sapientiae et veritatis emergerem, non respuit  
comitem, sed quod est gloriosius, praecucurrit.  
5 Itaque cum per universam convictus nostri et fami-  
liaritatis aetatem mea cogitatio volveretur, in illo  
praecipue sermone eius mentis meae resedit intentio,  
quo Q. Caecilium superstitiosis vanitatibus etiamnunc  
inhaerentem disputatione gravissima ad veram reli-  
gionem reformavit.

## MINUCIUS FELIX: OCTAVIUS

I. As in thought I pondered and reflected over 1  
memories of my good and trusty comrade, Octavius,  
such an impression of sweetness and charm remained  
with me that I seemed somehow reliving in the past,  
rather than recalling to memory things over and  
done ; so vividly did his image, though withdrawn 2  
from the eyes, remain imprinted on my heart and  
inmost sense. No wonder that on his departure so 3  
excellent and saintly a man has left behind him a  
measureless sense of loss ; the fact is that he  
cherished such warm affection for me that, both in our  
amusements and serious occupations, our wills were  
tuned to perfect concert, whether of likes or dislikes ;  
you might have thought a single mind had been  
parted into two. Thus he was at once sole confidant 4  
of my affections, and my partner in wanderings from  
truth ; and when, after the gloom had been dispelled,  
I was emerging from the depth of darkness into the  
light of wisdom and truth, he did not reject me as  
a companion, but—all honour to him—led the way.  
So, as my thoughts ranged over the whole period of 5  
our association and familiarity, my attention fastened  
above all else on that discourse of his, in which, by  
sheer weight of argument, he converted Caecilius,  
who was still immersed in superstitious vanities, to  
true religion.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 1 II. Nam negotii et visendi mei gratia Romam contenderat, relicta domo, coniuge, liberis, et—quod est in liberis amabilius—adhuc annis innocentibus et adhuc dimidiata verba temptantibus, loquellam ipso offensantis linguae fragmine dulciorem.
- 2 Quo in adventu eius non possum exprimere sermonibus, quanto quamque inpatienti gaudio exultaverim, cum augeret maxime laetitiam meam amicissimi hominis inopinata praesentia.
- 3 Igitur post unum et alterum diem, cum iam et aviditatem desiderii frequens adsiduitatis usus implesset et quae per absentiam mutuam de nobis nesciebamus, relatione alterna comperissemus, placuit Ostiam petere, amoenissimam civitatem, quod esset corpori meo siccandis umoribus de marinis lavacris blanda et adposita curatio: sane et ad vindemiam feriae iudiciariam curam relaxaverant. Nam id temporis post aestivam diem in temperiem semet autumnitas dirigebat.
- 4 Itaque cum diluculo ad mare inambulando litori pergeremus, ut et aura adspirans leniter membra vegetaret et cum eximia voluptate molli vestigio cedens harena subsideret, Caecilius simulacro Serapidis denotato, ut vulgus superstitiosus solet, manum ori admovens osculu, labiis pressit.
- 1 III. Tunc Octavius ait: “ Non boni viri est, Marce frater, hominem domi forisque lateri tuo inhaerentem sic in hac inperitiae vulgaris caecitate deserere, ut tam luculento die in lapides eum patiaris inpingere, effigiatos sane et unctos et coronatos, cum scias huius

II. He had come to Rome on business and to pay 1  
me a visit, leaving home and wife and children—  
children still at the lovable stage of the years of  
innocence, trying to form broken words, in the  
pretty prattle which the broken efforts of a stumbling  
tongue render still sweeter. Words cannot express 2  
the transports of pleasure and joy with which I wel-  
comed his arrival, and the unexpectedness of a visit  
from so dear a friend enhanced my delight beyond  
measure.

Well, after one or two days, when frequency of 3  
intercourse had satisfied the eager longings of affec-  
tion, and we had learned by mutual talk things of  
which, through mutual absence, we were uninformed,  
we decided to go to Ostia, a very pleasant resort, as  
a course of sea baths seemed an agreeable and apt  
treatment as a corrective for the humours of my  
body; and just then too the vintage holidays had  
brought relief from judicial duties. For at that time  
after the summer solstice autumn was beginning to  
turn to a milder warmth.

So then, early one morning, as we were walking sea- 4  
ward along the shore, that the fresh sea breeze might  
invigorate our limbs, and that the yielding sand  
might give the delightful sensation of subsidence at  
each footstep, Caecilius noticed an image of Serapis,  
and—as is the superstitious habit of the vulgar—  
put his hand to his mouth and blew it a kiss.

III. Then Octavius said: “With a friend who 1  
indoors and out clings to your side, no good man,  
brother Marcus, has the right to leave him in the  
thick darkness of vulgar ignorance, and allow him in  
broad daylight to wreck himself on stones, however  
carved and anointed and garlanded they may be,

## MINUCIUS FELIX

erroris non minorem ad te quam ad ipsum infamiam redundare.”

- 2 Cum hoc sermone eius medium spatium civitatis  
3 emensi iam liberum litus tenebamus. Ibi harenas  
extimas, velut sterneret ambulacro, perfundens  
lenis unda tendebat: et, ut semper mare etiam  
positis flatibus inquietum est, etsi non canis spumosis-  
que fluctibus exhibat ad terram, tamēn crispis tor-  
tuosisque ibidem erroribus delectati perquam sumus,  
cum in ipso aequoris limine plantas tingeremus,  
quod vicissim nunc adpulsum nostris<sup>a</sup> pedibus ad-  
luderet fluctus, nunc relabens ac vestigia retrahens  
4 in sese resorberet. Sensim itaque tranquilleque pro-  
gressi oram curvi molliter litoris iter fabulis fallen-  
tibus legebamus. Haec fabulae erant Octavi dis-  
5 serentis de navigatione narratio. Sed ubi eundi  
spatium satis iustum cum sermone consumpsimus,  
eandem emensi viam rursus versis vestigiis tere-  
bamus, et cum ad id loci ventum est, ubi subductae  
naviculae substratis roboribus a terrena labe sus-  
pensae quiescebant, pueros videmus certatim  
gestientes testarum in mare iaculationibus ludere.  
6 Is lusus est testam teretem iactatione fluctuum  
levigatam legere de litore, eam testam plano situ  
digitis comprehensam inclinem ipsum atque humi-  
lem quantum potest super undas inrotare, ut illud  
iaculum vel dorsum maris raderet enataret, dum  
leni impetu labitur, vel summis fluctibus tonsis  
emicaret emergeret, dum adsiduo saltu sublevatur.  
Is se in pueris victorem ferebat, cuius testa et pro-  
curreret longius et frequentius exsiliret.

---

<sup>a</sup> The *ambulacrum* was a regular feature of the baths, villas, and public resorts, which provided opportunities for



### OCTAVIUS, III. 1-6

when you know that the shame of his error redounds no less to your discredit than to his."

The conversation brought us half-way from the 2 town to the open beach. A gentle ripple, playing over 3 the verge of the sands, levelled them into a sort of promenade<sup>a</sup>: the sea, even where there is no breeze, is in constant movement, and drove shorewards not in white crested waves, but in curling ripples. Its vagaries were quite delightful, as we let it wet our soles at the water's edge, as the advancing wave now played around our feet, and anon receded and withdrew, sucking back into itself. So we went on 4 our quiet, leisurely way, skirting the edge of the gently curving shore and beguiling the way with stories. Our stories were an account of Octavius's adventures at sea. But when, engaged in talk, we had 5 gone some distance, we turned back and retraversed our steps; and when we had reached the place where some boats, supported on oak planking, to save them from ground rot, were lying idle, we saw a party of boys competing eagerly in their game of throwing sherds into the sea. The game is to choose 6 from the shore a flat sherd, one smoothed by the friction of the waves, to catch hold of the sherd by the flat side, and then bending forward and stooping, to send it spinning as far as one can on the top of the waves, so that the missile either skims the surface of the sea and swims on its way, gliding forward with a gentle impulse; or else shaves the tops of the waves, glancing and jumping as it takes its successive leaps. The boy won, whose sherd went furthest, and made most hops.

quiet constitutionals, and for readings, lectures, and organized discussion.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 1 IV. Igitur cum omnes hac spectacula voluptate  
caperemur, Caecilius nihil intendere neque de con-  
tentione ridere, sed tacens, anxius, segregatus dolere  
2 nescio quid vultu fatebatur. Cui ego: "Quid  
hoc est rei? cur non agnosco, Caecili, alacritatem  
tuam illam et illam oculorum etiam in seriis hilari-  
tatem requiro?"
- 3 Tum ille: "Iam dudum me Octavi<sup>us</sup> nostri acriter  
angit et remordet oratio, qua in te invectus obiur-  
gavit neglegentiae, ut me dissimulante gravius  
4 argueret inscientiae. Itaque progrediar ulterius:  
de toto integro mihi cum Octavio res est. Si placet,  
ut ipsius sectae homo cum eo disputem, iam profecto  
intelleget facilius esse in contubernalibus disputare  
5 quam conserere sapientiam. Modo in istis ad  
tutelam balnearum iactis et in altum procurrentibus  
petrarum obicibus residamus, ut et requiescere de  
itinere possimus et intentius disputare."
- 6 Et cum dicto eius adsedimus, ita ut me ex tribus  
medium lateris ambitione protegerent: nec hoc  
obsequi fuit aut ordinis aut honoris, quippe cum amicitia  
pares semper aut accipiat aut faciat, sed ut arbiter et  
utrisque proximus aures darem et disceptantes duos  
medius segregarem.
- 1 V. Tum sic Caecilius exorsus est: "Quamquam  
tibi, Marce frater, de quo cum maxime quaerimus  
non sit ambiguum, utpote cum diligenter in utroque  
vivendi genere versatus repudiari alterum, *alterum*  
conprobaris, in praesentiarum tamen ita tibi infor-  
mandus est animus, ut libram teneas aequissimi  
iudicis nec in alteram partem propensus incumbas,  
ne non tam ex nostris disputationibus nata sententia

IV. While we were all enjoying the fun of looking 1 on, Caecilius took no notice and did not laugh at the sport, but in silence, gloomy and aloof, showed in his face that he was troubled about something. I said 2 to him: "What is the matter? Why no hint, Caecilius, of your usual liveliness, and why miss the gaiety you show even in serious affairs?"

He replied: "I have been brooding over the 3 remarks of our friend Octavius, who stung and nettled me, when he attacked and chid you for negligence, but indirectly brought a heavier charge of ignorance against me. I will go further: I will have 4 it out with Octavius from start to finish. If he is agreeable that I, as one of the following, should argue the case with him, he will, I am sure, find that it is easier to discourse among comrades than to join battle in philosophy. Let us just sit down on yonder 5 boulders piled to protect the baths, and running out into the deep water: so that we may rest after our walk, and concentrate on the argument."

We sat down, as he suggested, my friends flanking 6 me, covering either side, and myself in the middle; not by way of etiquette as a mark of rank or distinction, for friendship always assumes or creates equality, but that I might act as arbiter, give close hearing to both, and as middle man part the two combatants.

V. Then Caecilius led off: "Although you, brother 1 Marcus, have made up your mind on the subject of our inquiry, seeing that, after careful experience of either way of life, you have repudiated the one and approved the other, yet for the time being you must deliberately hold the balance of impartial justice, without any bias inclining to one side or the other, so that your decision may be felt to have been based

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 2 quam ex tuis sensibus prolata videatur. Proinde,  
si mihi quasi novus aliqui et quasi ignarus partis  
utriusque considas, nullum negotium est patefacere,  
omnia in rebus humanis dubia, incerta, suspensa  
3 magisque omnia verisimilia quam vera: quo magis  
mirum est nonnullos taedio investigandae peni-  
tus veritatis cuilibet opinioni temerè succumbere  
quam in explorando pertinaci diligentia perseverare.
- 4 Itaque indignandum omnibus, indolendum est  
audere quosdam, et hoc studiorum rudeſ, litterarum  
profanos, expertes artium etiam sordidarum, certum  
aliquid de summa rerum ac maiestate decernere, de  
qua tot omnibus saeculis sectarum plurimarum usque  
5 adhuc ipsa philosophia deliberat. Nec inmerito,  
cum tantum absit ab exploratione divina humana  
mediocritas, ut neque quae supra nos caelo suspensa  
sublata sunt, neque quae infra terram profunda  
demersa sunt, aut scire sit datum aut ruspari re-  
ligiosum, et beati satis satisque prudentes iure  
videamur, si secundum illud vetus sapientis oraculum  
6 nosmet ipsos familiariter noverimus. Sed quatenus  
indulgentes insano atque inepto labori ultra humili-  
tatis nostrae terminos evagamur et in terram proiecti  
caelum ipsum et ipsa sidera audaci cupiditate tran-  
scendimus, vel hunc errorem saltem non vanis et  
7 formidulosis opinionibus implicemus. Sint prin-  
cipio omnium semina natura in se coeunte densata,  
quis hic auctor deus? Sint fortuitis concursionibus

---

<sup>a</sup> The γυνῶθι σεαυτὸν precept of the Delphic shrine.

<sup>b</sup> The summary of Epicurean and Atomist philosophy is taken from Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum*, and Lucretius.

on our disputation rather than the product of your own feelings. So if you will please take your seat as 2 a novice, ignorant as it were of either side of the case, it will be easy to make it clear, that in human affairs everything is doubtful, uncertain, and in suspense, everything a matter of probability rather than truth; it is no wonder that people, tired of deeply investigat- 3 ing truth, should hastily yield to any random opinion, rather than with unremitting diligence persevere in the search. Everyone must feel indignant and 4 annoyed that certain persons—persons untrained in study, uninitiated in letters, ignorant even of the meaner arts—should come to fixed conclusions upon the universe in its majesty, which through the centuries is to this day matter of debate in countless schools of philosophy. And no wonder, seeing that man's limited 5 intelligence is so incapable of exploring God, that neither in the case of things above, suspended aloft in heaven, nor of things below the earth plunged beneath the depths, is it given to him to know, or permitted to scrutinize, without irreverence. Sufficient be it for our happiness, and sufficient for our wisdom if, according to the ancient oracle of the wise man,<sup>a</sup> we learn closer acquaintance with our own selves. But seeing that with mad and fruitless toil we over- 6 step the limits of our humble intelligence, and from our earth-bound level seek, with audacious eagerness, to scale heaven itself and the stars of heaven, let us at least not aggravate our error by vain and terrifying imaginations.

“Suppose that in the beginning nature gathered 7 the seeds of all things together,<sup>b</sup> and formed them into a mass—what god was here the author? Or suppose that by their fortuitous clashing the elements

## MINUCIUS FELIX

totius mundi membra coalita, digesta, formata, quis deus machinator? Sidera licet ignis accenderit et caelum licet sua materia suspenderit, licet terram fundaverit pondere et mare licet influxerit e liquore unde haec religio, unde formido, quae superstitio est?

8 Homo et animal omne quod nascitur, inspiratur, attollitur, elementorum ut voluntaria concretio est, in quae rursum homo et animal omne dividitur, solvitur, dissipatur: ita in fontem refluunt et in semet omnia revolvuntur, nullo artificē nec iudice

9 nec auctore. Sic congregatis ignium seminibus soles alios atque alios semper splendere, sic exhalatis terrae vaporibus nebulas semper adolescere, quibus densatis coactisque nubes altius surgere, isdem labentibus pluvias fluere, flare ventos, grandines increpare, vel nimbis conclidentibus tonitrua mugire, rutilare fulgora, fulmina praemicare: adeo passim cadunt, montes inruunt, arboribus incurrunt, sine dilectu tangunt loca sacra et profana, homines noxios feriunt

10 et saepe religiosos. Quid tempestates loquar varias et incertas, quibus nullo ordine vel examine rerum omnium impetus volutatur? in naufragiis bonorum malorumque fata mixta, merita confusa? in incendiis interitum convenire insontium nocentumque? et cum tabe pestifera caeli tractus inficitur, sine discrimine omnes deperire? et cum belli ardore saevitur,

11 meliores potius occumbere? In pace etiam non tantum aequatur nequitia melioribus, sed et colitur, ut in pluribus nescias, utrum sit eorum detestanda

---

\* <sup>a</sup> οὐ γὰρ Ἄρης ἀγαθῶν φείδεται ἀλλὰ κακῶν.

of the universe combined, took order and shape—  
 what god was the artificer? Fire may have kindled  
 the stars; the nature of its material have suspended  
 heaven on high, founded the earth by its weight,  
 drained moisture into the sea—if so, what ground is  
 there for religion, for terror and superstitious dread?  
 Man and each living thing is born, lives, grows up; 8  
 consists of a spontaneous combination of elements,  
 into which once again man and every living thing is  
 separated, resolved and dispersed; so all things flow  
 back to their source, and return unto themselves  
 without artificer, or arbiter, or author of their being.  
 So by the gathering together of the seeds of fire, 9  
 new and ever new suns continually shine; so by the  
 exhalation of earth's vapours mists continually grow,  
 and by their condensation and combination clouds rise  
 on high; and as they drop, rains fall, winds blow,  
 hailstorms rattle; as the storm-clouds collide,  
 thunders growl, lightning flashes, thunderbolts dart;  
 yes and they fall at random, hurtle down upon the  
 mountains, charge trees, smite without distinction  
 places sacred or profane; strike guilty men or often  
 enough the god-fearing. Why tell of tempests capri- 10  
 cious and uncertain, which without rule or rhyme  
 bring havoc in their wake? or how in shipwrecks the  
 fates of the good and of the evil are confounded, and  
 their deserts confused? in fires, of indiscriminate  
 destruction of the innocent and of the guilty? or,  
 when some region of the sky is infected with the  
 blight of pestilence, how all perish without distinc-  
 tion? In the rage and heat of battle, how the better  
 men are first to fall<sup>a</sup>? In peace too, not only does 11  
 rascality run level with virtue, but wins such respect  
 that half the times one does not know whether to

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 12 pravitas an optanda felicitas. Quod si mundus divina providentia et alicuius numinis auctoritate regeretur, numquam mereretur Phalaris et Dionysius regnum, numquam Rutilius et Camillus exilium, numquam
- 13 Socrates venenum. Ecce arbusta frugifera, ecce iam seges cana, iam temulenta vindemia imbri corrumpitur, grandine caeditur. Adeo aut incerta nobis veritas occultatur et premitur, aut, quod magis credendum est, variis et lubricis casibus soluta legibus fortuna dominatur.
- 1 VI. "Cum igitur aut fortuna certa aut incerta natura sit, quanto venerabilius ac melius antistitem veritatis maiorum excipere disciplinam, religiones traditas colere, deos, quos a parentibus ante inbutus es timere quam nosse familiarius, adorare, nec de numinibus ferre sententiam, sed prioribus credere, qui adhuc rudi saeculo in ipsius mundi natalibus meruerunt deos vel faciles habere vel reges! Inde adeo per universa imperia, provincias, oppida videmus singulos sacrorum ritus gentiles habere et deos colere muncipes, ut Eleusinos Cererem, Phrygas Matrem, Epidauros Aesculapium, Chaldaeos Belum, Astarten

---

<sup>a</sup> Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum 570-554 B.C., was said to have burned his victims alive in a brazen bull.

<sup>b</sup> Dionysius the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse 405-367 B.C., was regarded as the typical tyrant by Cicero, Plutarch and others.

<sup>c</sup> P. Rutilius Rufus, consul 105 B.C., exposed the extortions of the *publicani* in Asia. In revenge they prosecuted him for malversation, and he was sent into exile 92 B.C.

<sup>d</sup> M. Furius Camillus, the conqueror of Veii 396 B.C., was accused of misappropriation of the spoils and retired into voluntary exile.

<sup>e</sup> Socrates was convicted by an Athenian jury on a charge



detest their depravity or to envy their good fortune. But if the world were governed by divine providence 12 and the authority of some deity, Phalaris <sup>a</sup> and Dionysius <sup>b</sup> would never have deserved a throne, Rutilius <sup>c</sup> and Camillus <sup>d</sup> exile, or Socrates <sup>e</sup> the hemlock. See, the trees laden with fruit, the corn already 13 white to harvest, the vineyard heavy with wine—ruined by rain or cut with hail. So hidden from our eyes and overlaid is the uncertain truth, or—as seems more credible—lawless chance, with tricky and hazardous accidents, rules over all.

VI. “Seeing then that either chance is certain,<sup>f</sup> or 1 nature uncertain, how much more reverent and better it is to accept the teaching of our elders as the priest of truth; to maintain the religions handed down to us; to adore the gods, whom from the cradle you were taught to fear rather than to know familiarly; not to dogmatize about divinities, but to believe our forefathers who, in an age still rude, in the world’s nativity, were privileged to regard gods as kindly or as kings! Hence it is that throughout wide empires, provinces and towns, we see each people having its own individual rites and worshipping its local gods, the Eleusinians Ceres,<sup>g</sup> the Phrygians the Great Mother,<sup>h</sup> the Epidaurians Aesculapius,<sup>i</sup> the of “corrupting the youth,” and condemned to death by drinking hemlock, 399 B.C.

<sup>f</sup> Ms. reads *certa*, but *caeca* “blind” is more probably correct.

<sup>g</sup> The Eleusinian Mysteries, celebrated at Eleusis (near Athens), originating in nature worship, were associated with Demeter, the Earth-Mother.

<sup>h</sup> Phrygia was the home of the worship of Cybele, the “Great Mother” of gods and all procreative life.

<sup>i</sup> The most famous temple of Aesclepius, god of healing, was at Epidaurus in Argolis.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

Syros, Dianam Tauros, Gallos Mercurium, universa  
2 Romanos. Sic eorum potestas et auctoritas totius  
orbis ambitus occupavit, sic imperium suum ultra  
solis vias et ipsius oceani limites propagavit,  
dum exercent in armis virtutem religiosam, dum  
urbem muniunt sacrorum religionibus, castis virgini-  
bus, multis honoribus ac nominibus sacerdotum, dum  
obsessi et citra solum Capitolium capti<sup>c</sup>colunt deos,  
quos alius iam sprevisset iratos, et per Gallorum acies  
mirantium superstitionis audaciam pergunt telis  
inermes, sed cultu religionis armati, dum captis in  
hostilibus moenibus adhuc ferociente victoria numina  
victa venerantur, dum undique hospites deos quaerunt  
et suos faciunt, dum aras extruunt etiam ignotis  
3 numinibus et Manibus. Sic, dum universarum  
gentium sacra suscipiunt, etiam regna meruerunt.  
Hinc perpetuus venerationis tenor mansit, qui longa  
aetate non infringitur, sed augetur : quippe antiquitas  
caerimoniis atque fanis tantum sanctitatis tribuere  
consuevit quantum adstruxerit vetustatis.

---

<sup>a</sup> Belus—Bel or Baal—was the generic name for the local deities or “lords” of Chaldaeans, Phoenicians and other Semitic stocks.

<sup>b</sup> Astarte, or Ashtoreth, was the most prominent of Phoenician goddesses at Tyre, Sidon, Cyprus, Carthage and elsewhere.

<sup>c</sup> The Tauri are the people of the Tauric Chersonese, the Crimea, where Iphigenia became priestess to the local goddess, identified with Greek Artemis.

<sup>d</sup> From Virg. *Aen.* vi. 795 “extra anni solisque vias . . . proferet imperium.”

<sup>e</sup> C. Fabius Dorso, in order to perform certain religious rites of the Fabian gens, proceeded to the Quirinal in sacrificial robes, and bearing the sacred vessels, passed through the ranks of the besieging Gauls, and returned unharmed (Livy, v. 46).

Chaldaeans Bel,<sup>a</sup> the Syrians Astarte,<sup>b</sup> the Taurians<sup>c</sup> Diana, the Gauls Mercury, the Romans one and all. Thus it is that their power and authority has embraced the circuit of the whole world, and has advanced the bounds of empire beyond the paths of the sun,<sup>d</sup> and the confines of ocean; while they practise in the field god-fearing valour, make strong their city with awe of sacred rites, with chaste virgins, with many a priestly dignity and title; besieged and imprisoned within the limits of the Capitol, they still revered the gods, whom others might have spurned as wrath, and through the ranks of Gauls amazed at their undaunted superstition passed on armed not with weapons but with godly reverence and fear<sup>e</sup>; in captured fortresses, even in the first flush of victory, they reverence the conquered deities; everywhere they entertain the gods and adopt them as their own<sup>f</sup>; while they raise altars even to the unknown deities, and to the spirits of the dead. Thus is it that they adopt the sacred rites of all nations, and withal have earned dominion. Hence the course of worship has continued without break, not impaired but strengthened by the lapse of time; for indeed antiquity is wont to attach to ceremonies and to temples a sanctity proportioned to the length of their continuance.

<sup>f</sup> It was the practice, before an enemy's city was attacked, for Roman priests according to a prescribed formula to invoke its tutelary gods, inviting them to leave it and to come to Rome, where they would receive equal or fuller worship (Pliny, *N.H.* xxviii. 4). Thus Camillus (Livy, v. 21-22) before Veii invokes Apollo and Juno. Macrobius (*Sat.* iii. 9) preserves a long ritual formula (*carmen*), or "evocation," addressed to the tutelary gods of Carthage, and concluding with the offer of a temple and games.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 1 VII. "Nec tamen temere (ausim enim interim et ipse concedere et sic melius errare) maiores nostri aut observandis auguriis aut extis consulendis aut instituendis sacris aut delubris dedicandis operam  
2 navaverunt. Specta de libris memoriam; iam eos deprehendes initiasse ritus omnium religionum, vel ut remuneraretur divina indulgentia, vel ut averteretur imminens ira aut iam tumens et saeviens  
3 placaretur. Testis Mater Idaea, quae adventu suo et probavit matronae castitatem et urbem metu hostili liberavit; testes equestrium fratrum in lacu, sicut se ostenderant, statuæ consecratae, qui anheli spumantibus equis atque fumantibus de Perse victoriam eadem die qua fecerant nuntiaverunt; testis ludorum offensi Iovis de somnio plebei hominis iteratio: et Deciorum devotio rata testis est; testis et Curtius, qui equitis sui vel mole vel honore hiatum  
4 profundae voraginis coaequavit. Frequentius etiam, quam volebamus, deorum praesentiam contempta

---

<sup>a</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 191-280, recounts the story. In 204 B.C., to secure the evacuation of Italy by the Carthaginians, the black stone of Cybele was transported from Pessinus in Asia Minor. The vessel stranded at the mouth of the Tiber, and the soothsayers declared that nothing but the virtue of a perfectly chaste woman could release it. When Claudia Quinta, a maiden whose chastity had been called in question, attached a rope to the vessel, it followed on to its destination.

<sup>b</sup> The decisive defeat of Perses, last King of Macedonia, at Pydna, took place in 168 B.C. The statues of the twin horsemen, Castor and Pollux, were placed beside the Lake Juturna in the Forum, where they had previously appeared in 502 B.C., to announce the victory over the Latins at Lake Regillus.

<sup>c</sup> Titus Latinus, a plebeian, was bidden in a dream to warn the consuls to renew the Ludi Romani. Disregarding a thrice-repeated intimation, he was smitten with illness; but on fulfilling the mandate was restored to health.

VII. "It was not at mere random—though here 1  
 I might venture to concede a point and go wrong  
 in good company—that our ancestors devoted their  
 attention to observing auguries, to consulting en-  
 trails, to instituting sacrifices, or dedicating shrines.  
 Look at the written records; you will find that all 2  
 religious rites originated either to secure the reward  
 of divine approval or to avert impending anger, or to  
 propitiate its swelling rage and fury. Witness the 3  
 Idaean Mother who at her coming vindicated a  
 matron's chastity and freed the city from fear of the  
 enemy<sup>a</sup>; witness the statues of the horsemen  
 brothers<sup>b</sup> consecrated, even as they appeared, in  
 the lake waters, who, breathless on their foaming  
 and smoking steeds, announced the victory over  
 Perses on the same day on which they had achieved  
 it; witness the revival of the games in honour of  
 offended Jupiter, thanks to the dream of a common  
 plebeian<sup>c</sup>; witness the devotion of the Decii, ratified  
 by Heaven<sup>d</sup>; and witness too Curtius and the gulf,  
 whose yawning mouth<sup>e</sup> horse and rider, or the honour  
 due to their devotion, closed. Only too often con- 4  
 tempt for the auspices has attested the presence of

<sup>a</sup> P. Decius Mus, the consul, having dreamed that in  
 the Latin War (340 B.C.) the general on one side and  
 the army on the other would perish, devoted himself and  
 the Latin army to the gods below. He was slain, and the  
 Romans were victorious. His son showed similar devotion  
 in the Third Samnite War (295 B.C.).

<sup>c</sup> In 365 B.C. a great gulf opened in the Forum, and the  
 seers declared that it would remain for ever unless Rome's  
 most precious possession was thrown in. M. Curtius, a  
 noble Roman youth, saying that nothing was so precious as  
 a brave man, mounted his horse, and in full armour leapt in.  
 The Lacus Curtius permanently marked the spot.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- auspicia contestata sunt. Sic Allia "nomen infaustum," sic Claudii et Iunii non proelium in Poenos, sed ferale naufragium est, et ut Trasimenus Romanorum sanguine et maior esset et decolor, spreuit auguria Flaminius, et ut Parthos signa repetamus, dirarum inprecationes Crassus et meruit  
5 et inrisit. Omitto vetera quae multa sunt, et de deorum natalibus, donis, muneribus negotio carmina poetarum, praedicta etiam de oraculis fata transilio, ne vobis antiquitas nimium fabulosa videatur. Intende templis ac delubris deorum, quibus Romana civitas et protegitur et ornatur: magis sunt augusta numinibus incolis, praesentibus, inquilinis quam  
6 cultu, insignibus et muneribus opulenta. Inde adeo pleni et mixti deo vates futura praecerpunt, dant cautelam periculis, morbis medellam, spem adflictis, opem miseris, solacium calamitatibus, laboribus levamentum. Etiam per quietem deos videmus, audimus, agnoscimus, quos impie per diem negamus, nolumus, peieramus.
- 1 VIII. "Itaque cum omnium gentium de dis immortalibus, quamvis incerta sit vel ratio vel origo, maneat tamen firma consensio, neminem fero tanta

---

<sup>a</sup> The Allia, a small river twelve miles from Rome, was the scene of the defeat by the Gauls under Brennus in 390 B.C. The battle was fought on an inauspicious day, that following the Ides.

<sup>b</sup> P. Claudius Pulcher and L. Junius Pullus, consuls in 249 B.C., suffered naval disaster in the First Punic War, the former by defeat, and the latter by a tempest. When warned by the keeper of the sacred chickens that they would not feed, "Then let them drink," replied the consul, and threw them into the sea.

<sup>c</sup> C. Flaminius commanded, and fell, at the battle of Lake

the gods. So with the Allia<sup>a</sup> of 'ill-omened name'; so with the fleet of Claudius and Junius, not in action against the Carthaginians, but in disastrous wreck<sup>b</sup>; and did not Trasimene run red with blood of Romans because Flaminius despised the auguries<sup>c</sup>? And had we not to reclaim our standards from the Parthians because Crassus dared and derided the imprecations<sup>d</sup> of the Dread Goddesses? <sup>a</sup> I omit old 5 instances, not a few; I take no account of the songs of the poets touching the births of gods, their gifts and their rewards; I pass predictions of fate conveyed by oracles, for fear of your regarding antique lore as fabulous. Turn your gaze on the temples and shrines of gods by which the commonwealth of Rome is protected and adorned: they owe more to the presence and the tenancy of the deities who dwell therein than to the worship, the decorations and the votive gifts with which they are enriched. Hence it is 6 that prophets, filled and inspired by God, anticipate the future, give warning in perils, healing in disease, hope to the afflicted, help to the wretched, solace in calamity, and in toil alleviation. Even in sleep we see, hear, and recognize the gods, whom by day we impiously deny, reject and mock with false oaths.

VIII. "Therefore, since all nations unhesitatingly 1 agree as to the existence of the immortal gods, however uncertain may be our account of them or of their origin, it is intolerable that any man should be

Trasimenus. His previous contempt for religious observances was notorious (Livy, xxii. 3; Cic. *De Div.* i. 35).

<sup>a</sup> When M. Lic. Crassus was setting out on his expedition against Parthia, in which he was defeated at Carrhae in 53 B.C. with the loss of Roman standards, the tribune Ateius, after performing certain rites, devoted C. to the Furies if he proceeded.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

audacia tamque inreligiosa nescio qua prudentia  
tumescentem, qui hanc religionem tam vetustam,  
*tam* utilem, tam salubrem dissolvere aut infirmare  
2 nitatur. Sit licet ille Theodorus Cyrenaeus, vel qui  
prior Diagoras Melius, cui Atheon cognomen adposuit  
antiquitas, qui uterque nullos deos adseverando  
timorem omnem, quo humanitas regitur, veneratio-  
nemque penitus sustulerunt: numquam tamen  
in hac impietatis disciplina simulatae philosophiae  
3 nomine atque auctoritate pollebunt. Cum Abderiten  
Protagoram Athenienses viri consulte potius quam  
profane de divinitate disputantem et expulerint suis  
finibus et in contione eius scripta deusserint, quid?  
homines (sustinebitis enim me impetum susceptae  
actionis liberius exerentem) homines, inquam, de-  
ploratae, illicitae ac desperatae factionis grassari  
4 in deos non ingemescendum est? Qui de ultima  
faece collectis imperitioribus et mulieribus credulis  
sexus sui facilitate labentibus plebem profanae  
coniurationis instituunt, quae nocturnis congrega-  
tionibus et ieiuniis sollemnibus et inhumanis cibis  
non sacro quodam, sed piaculo foederatur, latebrosa  
et lucifuga natio, in publicum muta, in angulis garrula,  
templa ut busta despiciunt, deos despuunt, rident  
sacra, miserentur miseri (si fas est) sacerdotum,  
honores et purpuras despiciunt, ipsi seminudi!  
5 Pro mira stultitia et incredibilis audacia! spernunt  
tormenta praesentia, dum incerta metuunt et futura,

---

<sup>a</sup> Diagoras of Melos, at the close of the fifth century B.C., and Theodorus the Cyrenaic, at the close of the fourth century, both earned the designation *Atheist*.



## OCTAVIUS, VIII. 1-5

so puffed up with pride and impious conceit of wisdom, as to strive to abolish or undermine religion, so ancient, so useful, and so salutary. He may be a Theodorus<sup>2</sup> of Cyrene,<sup>a</sup> or an earlier Diagoras of Melos, called Atheist by antiquity, who both alike, by asserting that there were no gods, cut at the root of all the fear and reverence by which mankind is governed ; yet will they never establish their impious tenets under the name and authority of pretended philosophy.

“ When Protagoras of Abdera,<sup>b</sup> by way of debate<sup>3</sup> rather than of profanity, discussed the godhead, the men of Athens expelled him from their borders, and burned his writings in the market-place. Is it not then deplorable that a gang—excuse my vehemence in using strong language for the cause I advocate—a gang, I say, of discredited and proscribed desperadoes band themselves against the gods? Fellows<sup>4</sup> who gather together illiterates from the dregs of the populace and credulous women with the instability natural to their sex, and so organize a rabble of profane conspirators, leagued together by meetings at night and ritual fasts and unnatural repasts, not for any sacred service but for piacular rites, a secret tribe that shuns the light, silent in the open, but talkative in hid corners ; they despise temples as if they were tombs ; they spit upon the gods ; they jeer at our sacred rites ; pitiable themselves, they pity (save the mark) our priests ; they despise titles and robes of honour, going themselves half-naked ! What<sup>5</sup> a pitch of folly ! what wild impertinence ! present tortures they despise, yet dread those of an uncertain

<sup>b</sup> Protagoras the Sophist, 490-415, was banished from Athens for impiety, probably in 415 B.C.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

et dum mori post mortem timent, interim mori non timent : ita illis pavorem fallax spes solacia rediviva blanditur !

- 1 IX. "Ac iam, ut fecundius nequiora proveniunt, serpentibus in dies perditis moribus per universum orbem sacraria ista taeterrima impiae coitionis adolescunt. Eruenda prorsus haec et execranda  
2 consensio. Occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt et amant mutuo paene antequam noverint : passim etiam inter eos velut quaedam libidinum religio miscetur, ac se promisce appellant fratres et sorores, ut etiam non insolens stuprum intercessionem sacri nominis fiat incestum. Ita eorum vana et demens  
3 superstitio sceleribus gloriatur. Nec de ipsis, nisi subsisteret veritas, maxime nefaria et honore praefanda sagax fama loqueretur. Audio eos turpissimae pecudis caput asini consecratum inepta nescio qua persuasione venerari : digna et nata religio talibus  
4 moribus ! Alii eos ferunt ipsius antistitis ac sacerdotis colere genitalia et quasi parentis sui adorare naturam : nescio an falsa, certe occultis ac nocturnis sacris adposita suspicio ! Et qui hominem summo supplicio pro facinore punitum et crucis ligna feralia eorum caerimonias fabulatur, congruentia perditis sceleratisque tribuit altaria, ut id colant quod meren-  
5 tur. Iam de initiandis tirunculis fabula tam detestanda quam nota est. Infans farre contactus, ut decipiat incautos, adponitur ei qui sacris inbuatur.

<sup>a</sup> This senseless scandal, according to Tac. *Hist.* v. 3. 4, was first charged against the Jews, called *Asinarii*. Tertullian, *Apol.* ch. 16, deals with it at length. Its popular currency is attested by the rude *graffito* found on the Palatine, where one Alexamenos is depicted adoring a crucified figure with the head of an ass.

<sup>b</sup> On sacramental eating of the god, and representation

future ; death after death they fear, but death in the present they fear not : for them illusive hope charms away terror with assurances of a life to come.

IX. "Already—for ill weeds grow apace—decay of 1  
morals grows from day to day, and throughout the  
wide world the abominations of this impious con-  
federacy multiply. Root and branch it must be ex-  
terminated and accursed. They recognize one another 2  
by secret signs and marks ; they fall in love almost  
before they are acquainted ; everywhere they  
introduce a kind of religion of lust, a promiscuous  
'brotherhood' and 'sisterhood' by which ordinary  
fornication, under cover of a hallowed name, is con-  
verted to incest. And thus their vain and foolish 3  
superstition makes an actual boast of crime. For  
themselves, were there not some foundation of truth,  
shrewd rumour would not impute gross and unmen-  
tionable forms of vice. I am told that under some  
idiotic impulse they consecrate and worship the head  
of an ass, the meanest of all beasts,<sup>a</sup> a religion worthy  
of the morals which gave it birth. Others say that they 4  
actually reverence the private parts of their director  
and high-priest, and adore his organs as parent of  
their being. This may be false, but such suspicions  
naturally attach to their secret and nocturnal rites.  
To say that a malefactor put to death for his crimes,  
and wood of the death-dealing cross, are objects of  
their veneration is to assign fitting altars to abandoned  
wretches and the kind of worship they deserve. De- 5  
tails of the initiation of neophytes are as revolting  
as they are notorious. An infant, cased in dough<sup>b</sup>  
to deceive the unsuspecting, is placed beside the  
of the god by dough cakes and other symbols, see Frazer,  
*The Golden Bough* (abridged), pp. 480-494.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

Is infans a tirunculo farris superficie quasi ad innoxios ictus provocato caecis occultisque vulneribus occiditur. Huius, pro nefas! sitienter sanguinem lambunt, huius certatim membra dispertiunt, hac foederantur hostia, hac conscientia sceleris ad silentium mutuum pignerantur. Haec sacra sacrilegiis omnibus ta-  
 6 triora. Et de convivio notum est; passim omnes locuntur, id etiam Cirtensis nostri testatur oratio. Ad epulas sollemni die coeunt cum omnibus liberis, sororibus, matribus, sexus omnis homines et omnis aetatis. Illic post multas epulas, ubi convivium caluit et incestae libidinis ebriatis fervor exarsit, canis qui candelabro nexus est, iactu offulae ultra spatium lineae, qua vinctus est, ad impetum et saltum pro-  
 7 vocatur. Sic everso et extincto conscio lumine inpuidentibus tenebris nexus infandae cupiditatis involvunt per incertum sortis, etsi non omnes opera, conscientia tamen pariter incesti, quoniam voto universorum adpetitur quicquid accidere potest in actu singulorum.

- 1 X. "Multa praetereo consulto: nam et haec nimis multa sunt, quae aut omnia aut pleraque omnium vera declarat ipsius pravae religionis obscuritas.
- 2 Cur etenim occultare et abscondere quicquid illud colunt magnopere nituntur, cum honesta semper publico gaudeant, scelera secreta sint? cur nullas

---

<sup>a</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 2 and 7, on these "Thyestean meals."

<sup>b</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 9.

<sup>c</sup> M. Corn. Fronto, referred to again in ch. 31 as *tuus Fronto*, was born at Cirta in Numidia, but as a young man repaired to Rome, and there attracted the notice of the Emperor Hadrian, A.D. 117-138. He became the most admired of rhetoricians, and enjoyed the favour and friendship of successive Emperors, acting as teacher in rhetoric to Marcus Aurelius, and later to his son Commodus. In 143

person to be initiated. The novice is thereupon induced to inflict what seem to be harmless blows upon the dough, and unintentionally the infant is killed<sup>a</sup> by his unsuspecting blows; the blood—oh, horrible—they lap up greedily; the limbs they tear to pieces eagerly; and over the victim they make league and covenant, and by complicity in guilt pledge themselves to mutual silence.<sup>b</sup> Such sacred rites are more foul than any sacrilege. Their form of feasting is 6 notorious; it is in everyone's mouth, as testified by the speech of our friend of Cirta.<sup>c</sup> On the day appointed they gather at a banquet with all their children, sisters, and mothers, people of either sex and every age. There, after full feasting, when the blood is heated and drink has inflamed the passions of incestuous lust, a dog which has been tied to a lamp is tempted by a morsel thrown beyond the range of his tether to bound forward with a rush.<sup>d</sup> The tale-telling light is upset and extinguished, and 7 in the shameless dark lustful embraces are indiscriminately exchanged; and all alike, if not in act, yet by complicity, are involved in incest, as anything that occurs by the act of individuals results from the common intention.

X. "Much I purposely pass over; I have said more 1 than enough of things most or all of which are true, as is shown by the secrecy of this depraved religion. Why make such efforts to obscure and conceal what- 2 ever is the object of their worship, when things honourable always rejoice in publicity, while guilt

he served a five-months' tenure of the consulship. His latest letter bears date A.D. 166; of his *Speech against the Christians* nothing survives.

<sup>a</sup> Exploited in full, Tert. *Apol.* 7. 1; 8. 7.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

aras habent, templa nulla, nulla nota simulacra, numquam palam loqui, numquam libere congregari, nisi illud, quod colunt et interpretunt, aut punien-  
3 dum est aut pudendum? Unde autem vel quis ille aut ubi deus unicus, solitarius, destitutus, quem non gens libera, non regna, non saltem Romana super-  
4 stitio noverunt? Iudaeorum sola et misera gentilitas unum et ipsi deum, sed palam, sed templis, aris, victimis caerimoniisque coluerunt, cuius adeo nulla vis nec potestas est, ut sit Romanis hominibus cum  
5 sua sibi natione captivus. At etiam Christiani quanta monstra, quae portenta confingunt! Deum illum suum, quem nec ostendere possunt nec videre, in omnium mores, actus omnium, verba denique et occultas cogitationes diligenter inquirere, discurrantem scilicet atque ubique praesentem: molestum illum volunt, inquietum, impudenter etiam curiosum, siquidem adstat factis omnibus, locis omnibus intererrat, cum nec singulis inservire possit per universa districtus nec universis sufficere in singulis occupatus.

1 XI. "Quid quod toto orbi et ipsi mundo cum sideribus suis minantur incendium, ruinam moliuntur, quasi aut naturae divinis legibus constitutus aeternus ordo turbetur, aut, rupto elementorum omnium foedere et caelesti conpage divisa, moles ista,  
2 qua continetur et cingitur, subruatur? Nec hac furiosa opinione contenti aniles fabulas adstruunt et adnectunt: renasci se ferunt post mortem et

loves secrecy? Why have they no altars, no temples, no recognized images? Why do they never speak in public, never meet in the open, if it be not that the object of their worship and their concealment is either criminal or shameful?

“Whence, who, or where is He, the One and only 3 God, solitary, forlorn, whom no free nation, no kingdom, no superstition known to Rome has knowledge of? The miserable Jewish nationality did indeed 4 worship one God, but even so openly, in temples, with altars, victims, and ceremonies; yet one so strengthless and powerless that he and his dear tribe with him are in captivity to Rome. And yet again 5 what monstrous absurdities these Christians invent about this God of theirs, whom they can neither show nor see! that he searches diligently into the ways and deeds of all men, yea even their words and hidden thoughts, hurrying to and fro, ubiquitously; they make him out a troublesome, restless, shameless and interfering being, who has a hand in everything that is done, interlopes at every turn, and can neither attend to particulars because he is distracted with the whole, nor to the whole because he is engaged with particulars.

XI. “Further, they threaten the whole world and 1 the universe and its stars with destruction by fire, as though the eternal order of nature established by laws divine could be put to confusion, or as though the bonds of all the elements could be broken, the framework of heaven be split in twain, and the containing and surrounding mass be brought down in ruin. Not content with this insane idea, they em- 2 bellish and embroider it with old wives’ tales; say that they are born anew after death from the cinders

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- cineres et favillas et nescio qua fiducia mendaciis suis invicem credunt : putes eos iam revixisse.
- 3 Anceps malum et gemina dementia, caelo et astris, quae sic relinquimus, ut invenimus, interitum denuntiare, sibi mortuis extinctis, qui sicut nascimur et
- 4 interimus, aeternitatem repromittere ! Inde videlicet et execrantur rogos et damnant ignium sepulturas, quasi non omne corpus, etsi flammis subtrahatur, annis tamen et aetatibus in terram resolvatur, nec intersit, utrum ferae diripiant an maria consumant an humus contegat an flamma subducat, cum cadaveribus omnis sepultura, si sentiunt, poena sit, si non sentiunt, ipsa conficiendi celeritate medicina.
- 5 Hoc errore decepti beatam sibi, ut bonis, et perpetem vitam mortui pollicentur, ceteris, ut iniustis, poenam sempiternam. Multa ad haec subpetunt, ni festinet oratio. Iniustos ipsos magis nec laboro ; iam docui : quamquam, etsi iustos darem, culpam tamen vel innocentiam *novi* fato tribui sententiis plurimorum.
- 6 Et haec vestra consensio est ; nam quicquid agimus, ut alii fato ita vos deo dicitis : sic sectae vestrae non spontaneos cupere, sed electos. Igitur iniquum iudicem fingitis qui sortem in hominibus puniat, non voluntatem.
- 7 “ Vellem tamen sciscitari, utrumne cum corporibus *an absque corporibus*, et corporibus quibus, ipsisne an innovatis resurgatur. Sine corpore ? hoc, quod



and the ashes, and with a strange unaccountable confidence believe in one another's lies : you might suppose they had already come to life again. One 3 perversion and folly matches the other. Against heaven and the stars, which we leave even as we found them, they denounce destruction ; for themselves when dead and gone, creatures born to perish, the promise of eternity ! Hence no doubt their de- 4 nunciation of funeral pyres and of cremation, just as though the body, even though spared the flame, would not in the course of years and ages be resolved into dust ; and just as though it mattered whether it is torn to pieces by wild beasts or drowned in the sea, or buried in the ground, or consumed in the flame ; for corpses, if they have sensation, must find all interment painful ; while if they have not, speed of dispatch is the best treatment. Under this de- 5 lusion they promise themselves, as virtuous, a life of never-ending bliss after death ; to all others, as evil-doers, everlasting punishment.

“ Much might be added on this subject, but my discourse must hasten to its end. That they themselves are evil-doers I need not labour to prove ; I have already shown it ; though even if I grant their well-doing, guilt or innocence is usually, I know, attributed to destiny. And here we have your agreement ; for 6 all action which others ascribe to fate, you ascribe to God ; followers of your sect are moved not by their own free-will, but by election ; and thus you invent an unjust judge, to punish men for their bad luck, not for their use of will.

“ Here I should like to ask whether the resurrection 7 is with bodies or without bodies, and if so, with what bodies, their own or made anew ? Without a body ?

## MINUCIUS FELIX

sciam, neque mens neque anima nec vita est. Ipso corpore ? sed iam ante dilapsum est. Alio corpore ?  
8 ergo homo novus nascitur, non prior ille reparatur. Et tamen tanta aetas abiit, saecula innumera fluxerunt: quis unus ullus ab inferis vel Protesilai sorte remeavit, horarum saltem permisso commeatu, vel ut exemplo  
9 crederemus ? Omnia ista figmenta male sanae opinionis et inepta solacia a poetis fallacibus in dulcedinem carminis lusa a vobis nimirum credulis in deum vestrum turpiter reformata sunt.

1 XII. "Nec saltem de praesentibus capitis experimentum, quam vos inritae pollicitationis cassa vota decipiant: quid post mortem impendeat, miseri,  
2 dum adhuc vivitis, aestimate. Ecce pars vestrum et maior, melior, ut dicitis, egetis algetis, opere fame laboratis, et deus patitur dissimulat, non vult aut non potest opitulari suis; ita aut invalidus aut iniquus  
3 est ! Tu, qui immortalitatem postumam somnias, cum periculo quateris, cum febribus ureris, cum dolore laceraris, nondum condicionem tuam sentis ? nondum adgnoscis fragilitatem ? invitus miser infirmitatis argueris nec fateris !

4 "Sed omitto communia. Ecce vobis minae, supplicia, tormenta, et iam non adorandae sed subeundae cruces, ignes etiam quos et praedicitis et timetis: ubi deus ille, qui subvenire revivescentibus potest,  
5 viventibus non potest ? Nonne Romani sine vestro deo imperant regnant, fruuntur orbe toto vestrique

---

<sup>a</sup> In the expedition against Troy Protesilaus was first of the Greeks to set foot on shore. As predicted by the oracle, this entailed his death; but by favour of the gods he was granted a three hours' return to life, to bid farewell to his wife Laodamia.

That means, so far as I know, neither mind, nor soul, nor life. With the same body? But that has already gone to pieces. With another body? in that case a new man is born, and not the former man renewed. And yet though time has come and gone, and in- 8 numerable ages have flowed on, what single individual has ever returned from the lower regions even with the Protesilaus<sup>a</sup> privilege of a few hours' furlough, so that we might have one example to trust? Your 9 figments of diseased imagination and the futile fairy-tales invented by poets' fancy to give sweetness to their song have been rehashed by your credulity into the service of your God.

XII. "You do not anyhow allow your experiences 1 of the present to undeceive your vain desires of promissory expectation. Let present life, poor fools, be your gauge of what happens after death. See how 2 some part of you, the greater and the better part as you say, suffer want, cold, toil, hunger; and yet your God permits and seems to overlook it; he is unwilling or unable to help his own; consequently he is either powerless or unjust. You dream of 3 posthumous immortality; when unnerved by danger, when parched with fever, when racked with pain, can you not be sensible of your condition? recognize your feebleness? against your will, poor fool, you are convicted of weakness, and yet will not admit it!

"Things, however, common to all I pass over: but 4 for you there stand in wait punishments, tortures, crosses (crosses not for adoration, but for endurance), yes and the flames which you foretell and fear; where is the God who will succour you in the next life, but in this life cannot? Have not the Romans without 5 your God empire and rule, do they not enjoy the whole

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- dominantur? Vos vero suspensi interim atque solliciti honestis voluptatibus abstinete: non spectacula visitis, non pompis interestis, convivias publica absque vobis; sacra certamina, praeceptos cibos et delibatos altaribus potus abhorretis. Sic re-
- 6 formidatis deos quos negatis! Non floribus caput nectitis, non corpus odoribus honestatis; reservatis unguenta funeribus, coronas etiam sepulcris denegatis, pallidi trepidi, misericordia digni, sed nostrorum deorum. Ita nec resurgitis miseri nec interim vivitis!
- 7 Proinde si quid sapientiae vobis aut verecundiae est, desinite caeli plagas et mundi fata et secreta rimari: satis est pro pedibus aspicere maxime indoctis inpolitis, rudibus agrestibus, quibus non est datum intellegere civilia, multo magis denegatum est disserere divina.
- 1 XIII. "Quamquam si philosophandi libido est, Socraten, sapientiae principem, quisque vestrum tantus est, si potuerit, imitetur. Eius viri, quotiens de caelestibus rogabatur, nota responsio est: 'quod
- 2 supra nos, nihil ad nos.' Merito ergo de oraculo testimonium meruit prudentiae singularis. Quod oraculum, idem ipse persensit, idcirco universis esse praepositum, non quod omnia comperisset, sed quod nihil se scire didicisset: ita confessae inperitiae
- 3 summa prudentia est. Hoc fonte defluxit Arcesilae et multo post Carneadis et Academicorum plu-

---

<sup>a</sup> The contention of Socrates was that such speculations had no bearing upon morals. The form of oracle cited by Diog. Laert. ii. 37 ἀνδρῶν ἀπάντων Σωκράτης σοφώτατος is clearly apocryphal.

<sup>b</sup> Arcesilas (315-240 B.C.) was regarded as founder of the second or Middle Academy, and Carneades (213-129 B.C.) of the New. Arcesilas taught suspension of judgement; Carneades degrees of probability.

world, and lord it over you? Meanwhile in anxious doubt you deny yourselves wholesome pleasures; you do not attend the shows; you take no part in the processions; fight shy of public banquets; abhor the sacred games, meats from the victims, drinks poured in libation on the altars. So frightened are you of the gods whom you deny! You twine no 6 blossoms for the head, grace the body with no perfumes; you reserve your unguents for funerals; refuse garlands even to the graves, pale, trembling creatures, objects for pity—but the pity of our gods! Poor wretches, for whom there is no life hereafter, yet who live not for to-day.

Well then, if you have any sense or modesty, have 7 done with prying into the regions of the sky, into the destiny and secrets of the universe; enough for the ignorant and uncultured, the rude and boorish, to look at what is under their nose; those who are not privileged to understand things civic are still less qualified to discuss things divine.

XIII. "Yet, if philosophize you must, let any that is 1 equal to the task imitate if he can Socrates, the prince of wisdom. When questioned about things in heaven his famous answer ran, 'that which is above us, does not concern us.'<sup>a</sup> Well did he deserve the 2 testimonial of the oracle to his superior wisdom. The reason, as he himself divined, why the oracle set him before all others, was not that he had found out the meaning of everything, but that he had learned that he knew nothing; so surely is the confession of ignorance the highest wisdom. From this source 3 flowed the guarded scepticism of Arcesilas, and later of Carneades <sup>b</sup> and most of the Academic school, on

## MINUCIUS FELIX

rimorum in summis quaestionibus tuta dubitatio, quo genere philosophari et caute indocti possunt  
 4 et docti gloriose. Quid? Simonidis Melici nonne admiranda omnibus et sectanda cunctatio? Qui Simonides, cum de eo, quid et quales arbitraretur deos, ab Hierone tyranno quaereretur, primo deliberationi diem petiit, postridie biduum prorogavit, mox alterum tantum admonitus adiunxit. Postremo, cum causas tantae morae tyrannus inquireret, respondit ille 'quod sibi, quanto inquisitio tardior  
 5 pergeret, tanto veritas fieret obscurior.' Mea quoque opinione quae sunt dubia, ut sunt, relinquenda sunt, nec, tot ac tantis viris deliberantibus, temere et audaciter in alteram partem ferenda sententia est, ne aut anilis inducatur superstitio aut omnis religio destruat.

- 1 XIV. Sic Caecilius et renidens (nam indignationis eius tumorem effusae orationis impetus relaxaverat): "Ecquid ad haec" ait "audet Octavius, homo Plautinae prosapiae, ut pistorum praecipuus, ita postremus philosophorum?"
- 2 "Parce," inquam, "in eum plaudere: neque enim prius exultare te dignum est concinnitate sermonis, quam utrimque plenius fuerit peroratum, maxime cum non laudi, set veritati disceptatio vestra nitatur.
- 3 Et quamquam magnum in modum me subtili varietate tua delectarit oratio, tamen altius moveor, non

---

<sup>a</sup> Simonides of Ceos (556-468 B.C.) was in the circle of Hiero of Syracuse. The story is taken from Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. 22.

<sup>b</sup> No good explanation of the personal allusion is forthcoming. Plautus, the Roman comedian, is said to have worked in a mill, and he uses the word *pistor* of those engaged in the milling and baking industries. It is quite

all the deepest questions : this is the kind of philosophy in which the unlearned may indulge with caution, the learned with distinction. May we not all admire and follow the hesitation of Simonides, the poet? <sup>a</sup> When Hiero the tyrant asked him what he thought of the being and attributes of the gods, he first begged for a day for consideration, next day for two days more ; then, on a new reminder, for yet another. Finally, when the tyrant asked his reasons for so much delay, he replied ‘ because to him, the longer the progress of the search, the more obscure became the truth.’ To my mind <sup>5</sup> things that are doubtful, as they are, should be left in doubt, and, where so many and such great minds differ, rash and hasty votes should not be cast on either side for fear of countenancing old wives’ superstition, or of subverting all religion.”

XIV. Caecilius ended beaming, for the flow of his oratory had relieved the swell of his indignation. “ And now, what says our brave Octavius, of the good old Plautine stock, prince of bakers but last and least of philosophers ? ” <sup>b</sup>

“ No crowing over him,” said I, “ you had better not plume yourself on your fine feathers, till both sides have been heard to a finish, especially as you are contending not for glory but for truth. Greatly <sup>3</sup> as your speech has delighted me in matter as well as manner, I am still more deeply impressed—not so

possible that Octavius had been in some way connected with the trade, and that this accounts for the turn of pleasantry. Attempts at emendation have been made—such as *istorum*, *Christianorum*, *ictorum*—but none of them seems happy, and all eliminate the alliterative *p*. Jokes are not intended for posterity.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- de praesenti actione, sed de toto genere disputandi, quod plerumque pro disserentium viribus et eloquentiae potestate etiam perspicuae veritatis condicio mutetur. Id accidere pernotum est auditorum facilitate, qui dum verborum lenocinio a rerum intentionibus avocantur, sine dilectu adsentiuntur dictis omnibus nec a rectis falsa secernunt, nescientes inesse et incredibile verum et verisimile mendacium.
- 4 Itaque, quo saepius adseverationibus credunt, eo frequentius a peritioribus arguuntur: sic adsidue temeritate decepti culpam iudicis transferunt ad incerti querellam, ut damnatis omnibus malint universa suspendere quam de fallacibus iudicare.
- 5 Igitur nobis providendum est, ne odio identidem sermonum omnium laboremus ita, ut in execrationem et odium hominum plerique simpliciores efferantur. Nam incaute creduli circumveniuntur ab his quos bonos putaverunt: mox errore consimili iam suspectis omnibus ut improbos metuunt etiam quos optimos sentire potuerunt.
- 6 “ Nos proinde solliciti, quod utrimque omni negotio disseratur et ex altera parte plerumque obscura sit veritas, ex altero latere mira subtilitas quae nonnumquam ubertate dicendi fidem confessae probationis imitetur, diligenter quantum potest singula ponderemus, ut argutias quidem laudare, ea vero quae recta sunt, eligere, probare, suscipere possimus.”
- 7 XV. “ Decedis ” inquit Caecilius “ officio iudicis religiosi : nam periniurium est vires te actionis meae



much with reference to the present pleadings, as to discussion in general—by the way in which, as a rule, truth of the clearest kind is affected by the talents of the disputants and the power of eloquence. An <sup>4</sup> audience, as everyone knows, is so easily swayed. Fascination of words distracts them from attention to facts; they give indiscriminating assent to all that is said; they fail to distinguish false from true, forgetting that the incredible contains an element of truth and probability an element of falsehood. The more often they believe asseverations, the more <sup>5</sup> frequently they are put in the wrong by the clever; dupes of their own persistent rashness, they impute the incompetence of the judge to the score of uncertainty, and with wholesale condemnation prefer suspension of all judgement to fallible conclusions. Accordingly we must take good care that we are not <sup>6</sup> to become the victims of a dislike of all arguments whatsoever, and so expose numbers of simple-minded people to general execration and odium. Careless credulity makes them the prey of those they trusted; and then they repeat their mistake by suspecting all alike, and distrusting the honesty even of those most entitled to their respect.

“We must therefore take every precaution: in <sup>7</sup> every question there are arguments on both sides; on the one hand truth is generally obscure, on the other subtlety, by mere flow of words, sometimes usurps the credit of admitted proof. We must weigh each point as carefully as we can, that while admiring ingenuity we may be able to choose, approve, and accept what is correct.”

XV. “You are abandoning,” said Caecilius, “the <sup>1</sup> rôle of a conscientious judge; it is grossly unfair to

## MINUCIUS FELIX

intergressu gravissimae disputationis infringere, cum Octavius integra et inlibata habeat singula, si potest, refutare."

2 "Id quod criminariis" inquam "in commune, nisi fallor, compendium protuli, ut examine scrupuloso nostram sententiam non eloquentiae tumore, sed rerum ipsarum soliditate libremus. Nec avocanda, quod quereris, diutius intentio, cum toto silentio liceat responsionem Ianuari nostri iam gestientis audire."

1 XVI. Et Octavius: "Dicam equidem, ut potero, pro viribus, et adnitendum tibi mecum est, ut conviciorum amarissimam labem verborum veracium flumine diluamus.

"Nec dissimulabo principio ita Natalis mei errantem, vagam, lubricam nutasse sententiam, ut sit nobis ambigendum, utrum tua eruditio<sup>1</sup> turbata sit, 2 an vacillaverit per errorem. Nam interim deos credere, interim se deliberare variavit, ut propositionis incerto incertior responsionis nostrae intentio fundaretur. Sed in Natali meo versutiam nolo, non credo: procul est ab eius simplicitate subtilis urbanitas. 3 Quid igitur? Ut qui rectam viam nescit, ubi, ut fit, in plures una diffinditur, quia viam nescit, haeret anxius nec singulas audet eligere nec universas probare: sic, cui non est veri stabile iudicium, prout infida suspicio spargitur, ita eius dubia opinio dissipatur. 4 Nullum itaque miraculum est, si Caecilius identidem in contrariis ac repugnantibus iactetur,

<sup>1</sup> *Waltzing accepts Haupt's vacillatio; but it is too ingenious, and too far removed from the codex.*

break the force of my pleading by interpolating this weighty subject for debate ; it is for Octavius to deal with my several points, whole and undiluted as they stand, and to refute them if he can."

"Believe me," said I, " what you object to was only 2 meant as my contribution to the common stock, that in careful weighing of the scales our judgement might turn not upon frothy eloquence, but upon actual solid facts. But you shall have no reason to complain of further distraction ; let us listen in complete silence to the reply ~~our~~ friend Januarius is burning to make."

XVI. Whereto Octavius : " I will answer to the 1 best of my ability, and I must rely on your assistance to turn the floodgates of truth upon the stains of blackening calumny.

"To begin with, I must honestly say that our good Natalis' views have been so wavering and erratic, so vague and slipshod, as to raise a doubt whether his learning has led to confusion, or his vacillations been due to misunderstanding. For he wavered, from belief 2 in the gods, at one moment, to keeping the question open at another, so that the ambiguity of statement might make my own line of reply more ambiguous. But to friend Natalis, I will not, and do not, impute trickery. Disingenuity is alien to his simplicity. Rather he is like a man who does not know the right 3 way, when the road happens to fork off in several directions ; and not knowing the way, he doubts and hesitates, and dare not choose one in particular, or approve all alike ; so, with a man who has not any firm grasp on truth, any untrustworthy suspicion flung out is enough to shatter his own fluctuating ideas. It is 4 no wonder that Caecilius finds himself tossed to and fro amid the waves and eddies of conflicting contra-

## MINUCIUS FELIX

aestuet, fluctuetur. Quod ne fiat ulterius, convincam et redarguam quamvis diversa, quae dicta sunt, una veritate confirmata probataque: sic nec dubitandum ei de cetero est nec vagandum.

- 5 “ Et quoniam meus frater erupit, aegre se ferre, stomachari, indignari, dolere, inlitteratos, pauperes, inperitos de rebus caelestibus disputare; sciat omnes homines, sine dilectu aetatis, sexus, dignitatis, rationis et sensus capaces et habiles procreatos nec fortunamantos, sed natura insitos esse sapientiam: quin ipsos etiam philosophos, vel si qui alii artium repertores in memorias exierunt, priusquam sollertia mentis parerent nominis claritatem, habitos esse plebeios, indoctos, seminudos: adeo divites facultatibus suis inligatos magis aurum suspicere consuesse quam caelum, nostrates pauperes et commentos esse prudentiam et tradidisse ceteris disciplinam. Unde apparet ingenium non dari facultatibus nec studio parari, sed cum ipsa mentis formatione generari.
- 6 Nihil itaque indignandum vel dolendum, si quicumque de divinis quaerat, sentiat, proferat, cum non disputantis auctoritas, sed disputationis ipsius veritas requiratur. Atque etiam, quo imperitior sermo, hoc inlustrior ratio est, quoniam non fucatur pompa facundiae et gratiae, sed, ut est, recti regula sustinetur.
- 1 XVII. “ Nec recuso, quod Caecilius adserere inter praecipua conisus est, hominem nosse se et circumspicere debere, quid sit, unde sit, quare sit: utrum elementis concretus an concinnatus atomis, an potius

dictions. To end the trouble I will refute and disprove his inconsistent arguments by proving and establishing a single truth ; setting him free from all further occasion for doubt or wandering.

“ When our good brother gives vent to feelings of 5 annoyance, vexation, indignation and regret that illiterate, poor and ignorant persons should discuss celestial things, he should remember that all men, without distinction of age, sex, or rank, were created with the capacity and power of reasoning and understanding ; wisdom is not acquired by fortune, but implanted by nature ; the philosophers themselves, the discoverers of arts whose names survive in memory, before their genius brought lustre on their names, were regarded as ignorant half-clad plebeians. Nay, the rich, engrossed in business calls, have their eyes on gold more often than on heaven ; it is our poor folk who have pondered wisdom, and handed on its teachings. Brain-power assuredly is not gotten by bargaining, or won by study, but is part and parcel of the furniture of the mind. There is no call for 6 indignation or resentment at anyone whatsoever inquiring, holding, or propounding views concerning the divine, for it is not the authority of the disputant, but the truth of the disputation that is in request. Indeed, the more unskilled the utterance the clearer is the reasoning, for it relies not on tricks of eloquence or graces of style, but is sustained on its own merits by the rule of right.

XVII. “ I take no exception to what Caecilius 1 advanced among his main contentions that man ought to know himself, to look round and see what, whence and why he is ; whether he is composed of elements, or fashioned out of atoms, or rather made,

## MINUCIUS FELIX

2 a deo factus, formatus, animatus. Quod ipsum explorare et eruere sine universitatis inquisitione non possumus, cum ita cohaerentia, conexa, concatenata sint, ut nisi divinitatis rationem diligenter excusseris, nescias humanitatis, nec possis pulchre gerere rem civilem, nisi cognoveris hanc communem omnium mundi civitatem, praecipue cum a fœris beluis hoc differamus, quod illa prona in terramque vergentia nihil nata sint prospicere nisi pabulum, nos, quibus vultus erectus, quibus suspectus in caelestis datus est, sermo et ratio, per quae deum adgnoscamus, sentimus, imitamur, ignorare nec fas nec licet ingerentem sese oculis et sensibus nostris caelestem claritatem : sacrilegii enim vel maxime instar est, humi quaerere quod in sublimi debeas invenire.

3 “ Quo magis mihi videntur qui hunc mundi totius ornatum non divina ratione perfectum volunt, sed frustis quibusdam temere cohaerentibus conglobatum, mentem, sensum, oculos denique ipsos non  
4 habere. Quid enim potest esse tam apertum, tam confessum tamque perspicuum, cum oculos in caelum sustuleris et quae sunt infra circaque lustraveris, quam esse aliquod numen praestantissimae mentis, quo omnis natura inspiretur, moveatur, alatur, gubernetur ?

5 “ Caelum ipsum vide : quam late tenditur, quam rapide volvitur, vel quod in noctem astris distinguitur, vel quod in diem sole lustratur : iam scies, quam sit in eo summi moderatoris mira et divina libratio. Vide  
6 ut luna auctu, senio, labore circumagat. Quid

formed and soul-endowed by God. But this is the 2  
 very thing we cannot investigate and unravel without  
 inquiry into the universe ; things are so coherent,  
 so closely combined and interconnected that, without  
 careful investigation of the nature of deity, you can-  
 not know that of man ; just as you cannot manage  
 civic affairs successfully without some knowledge of  
 the wider world-society of men ; all the more that  
 our distinction from the beasts is this, that their  
 downward earth-bound gaze is fixed only on their  
 food : we, with countenance erect and heavenward  
 gaze, endowed with speech and reason, enabling us  
 to recognize, perceive and imitate God, neither may  
 nor can ignore the heavenly sheen which thrusts itself  
 upon our eyes and senses ; for it is next door to  
 sacrilege to seek upon the ground that which you  
 ought to find on high.

“ I cannot but feel that those who regard the design 3  
 of this great universe not as the product of the  
 divine reason, but a conglomeration of odds and  
 ends fortuitously brought together, have neither  
 mind, nor sense, nor even eyes. What can be more 4  
 plain, more obvious, more patent as you lift your  
 eyes to heaven, and survey all things beneath you  
 and around, than that there exists some deity sur-  
 passing in wisdom, by whom all nature is inspired,  
 moved, nourished, and directed ?

“ Look at heaven itself, its vast expanse, its rapid 5  
 revolutions, at night studded with stars, by day  
 illumined by the sun ; it brings home to you the  
 balance wondrous and divine maintained by the  
 supreme controller. Look at the year, made by the  
 circling of the sun ; at the month determined by  
 the waxing, waning and action of the moon. Why 6

## MINUCIUS FELIX

tenebrarum et luminis dicam recursantes vices, ut sit nobis operis et quietis alterna reparatio? Relinquenda vero astrologis prolixior de sideribus oratio, vel quod regant cursum navigandi, vel quod arandi metendique tempus inducant. Quae singula non modo ut crearentur, fierent, disponderentur, summi opificis et perfectae rationis eguerunt, verum etiam sentiri, perspicui, intellegi sine summa sollertia et ratione non possunt.

7 “ Quid? cum ordo temporum ac ~~frugum~~ stabili varietate distinguitur, nonne auctorem suum parentemque testatur ver aequae cum suis floribus et aestas cum suis messibus et autumnii maturitas grata et

8 hiberna olivitas necessaria? Qui ordo facile turbaretur, nisi maxima ratione consisteret. Iam providentiae quantae, ne hiems sola glacie ureret aut sola aestas ardore torreret, autumnii et veris inserere medium temperamentum, ut per vestigia sua anni revertentis occulti et innoxii transitus laberentur!

9 “ Mari intende: lege litoris stringitur. Quicquid arborum est vide: quam e terrae visceribus animatur! Aspice oceanum: refluit reciprocis aestibus. Vide fontes: manant venis perennibus. Fluvios intueri: eunt semper exercitis lapsibus.

10 “ Quid loquar apte disposita recta montium, collium flexa, porrecta camporum? quidve animantium loquar adversus sese tutelam multiformem? alias armatas cornibus, alias dentibus saeptas et fundatas ungulis et spicatas aculeis aut pedum celeritate liberas aut elatione pinnarum?

11 “ Ipsa praecipue formae nostrae pulchritudo deum



speak of the recurrences of darkness and light, with  
 their alternate provision for work and rest? I may  
 leave to the astrologer a detailed description of the  
 stars, their influence upon the course of mariners, their  
 timing of the seasons for ploughing and for reaping.  
 Not merely did their creation, production, and co-  
 ordination require a supreme Artificer and perfected  
 intelligence, but further they cannot be felt, per-  
 ceived and understood without a supreme order of  
 skilled reasoning. Look at the fixed and varying  
 phases in the succession of the seasons and crops.  
 Does not spring with its flowers attest its author and 7  
 parent, summer with its harvests, the mellow ripe-  
 ness of autumn, and winter with its needed olive  
 yield? How easily would confusion overtake the  
 order, were it not held together by sovereign reason!  
 See how, to break the spell of winter's blistering ice or 8  
 summer's parching heat, providence interposed the  
 temperate mean of autumn and of spring, so that the  
 year, returning on its traces, might glide forward on  
 its imperceptible innocuous round.

"Mark well the sea, confined within its bounding 9  
 shore. Look at what tree you will, each drawing its  
 life from the bowels of earth! Behold the ocean,  
 ebbing and flowing with alternate tides. Watch the  
 fountains, flowing from perennial veins. Gaze on the  
 rivers, moving on with ever busy flow.

"Why tell of the ordered ridges of the mountains, 10  
 the winding of the hills, the stretches of the plains?  
 Or of the intricate protective equipment of the  
 animals; some armed with horns, some fenced with  
 teeth, and shod with hoofs, or barbed with stings, or  
 kept immune by swiftness of foot or soaring wing?  
 Above all, beauty of form declares the handiwork of 11

## MINUCIUS FELIX

fatetur artificem : status rigidus, vultus erectus, oculi in summo velut in specula constituti et omnes ceteri sensus velut in arce compositi.

- 1 XVIII. “ Longum est ire per singula. Nihil in homine membrorum est, quod non et necessitatis causa sit et decoris, et quod magis mirum est, eadem figura omnibus, sed quaedam unicuique linimenta deflexa : sic et similes universi videmur et inter se singuli dissimiles invenimur.
- 2 “ Quid nascendi ratio ? quid ? cupido generandi nonne a deo data est, et ut ubera partu maturescente lactescant et ut tener fetus ubertate lactei roris adolescat ?
- 3 “ Nec universitati solummodo deus, sed et partibus consulit. Britannia sole deficitur, sed circumfluentis maris tepore recreatur ; Aegypti siccitatem temperare Nilus amnis solet, Euphrates Mesopotamiam pro imbribus pensat, Indus flumen et serere orientem dicitur et rigare.
- 4 “ Quod si ingressus aliquam domum omnia exculta, disposita, ornata vidisses, utique praeesse ei crederes dominum et illis bonis rebus multo esse meliorem : ita in hac mundi domo, cum caelo terraque perspicias providentiam, ordinem, legem, crede esse universitatis dominum parentemque ipsis sideribus et totius mundi partibus pulchriorem.
- 5 “ Ni forte, quoniam de providentia nulla dubitatio est, inquirendum putas, utrum unius imperio an arbitrio plurimorum caeleste regnum gubernetur : quod ipsum non est multi laboris aperire cogitanti

God : our poise erect, our look upward, our eyes stationed in the watch-tower of the head, and the other senses all posted in the citadel.

XVIII. " It were a long task to enumerate particulars. There is not a detail in the human organism not made for use or ornament, and, more wonderful still, while all share the same figure, each individual shows personal deflections of type ; thus viewed in the mass we seem alike, yet have our individual peculiarities.

" Or consider the mechanism of birth, the instinct of reproduction. Is it not given of God that, as the embryo matures, the breasts should fill with milk, and the tender babe be nourished with the flow of milky dew?

Nor is it for the whole only that God takes thought, but likewise for the parts. Britain, for instance, lacks sunshine, but gets warmth from the surrounding sea ; the river Nile tempers the drought of Egypt ; the Euphrates serves Mesopotamia in place of rain ; the river Indus is said both to sow and to water the east. Supposing you went into a house and found everything neat, orderly and well-kept, surely you would assume it had a master, and one much better than the good things, his belongings ; so in this house of the universe, when throughout heaven and earth you see the marks of foresight, order and law, may you not assume that the lord and author of the universe is fairer than the stars themselves or than any portions of the entire world?

" But perhaps, while the existence of Providence admits no doubt, you think we should inquire whether a single sway or collective rule directs the heavenly realm. That question finds an easy answer

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- imperia terrena, quibus exempla utique de caelo.
- 6 Quando umquam regni societas aut cum fide coepit aut sine cruore discessit ? Omitto Persas de equorum hinnitu augurantes principatum, et Thebanorum par, mortuam fabulam, transeo. Ob pastorum et casae regnum de geminis memoria notissima est. Generi et soceri bella toto orbe diffusa sunt, et tam magni imperii duos fortuna non cepit.
- 7 “Vide cetera : rex unus apibus, dux unus in gregibus, in armentis rector unus. Tu in caelo summam potestatem dividi credas et scindi veri illius ac divini imperii totam maiestatem, cum palam sit parentem omnium deum nec principium habere nec terminum, qui nativitatem omnibus praestet, sibi perpetuitatem, qui ante mundum fuerit sibi ipse pro mundo : qui universa, quaecumque sunt, verbo iubet, ratione dispensat, virtute consummat.
- 8 “Hic non videri potest : visu clarior est ; nec comprehendi : *tactu purior est* ; nec aestimari : sensibus maior est, infinitus, immensus et soli sibi tantus, quantus est, notus. Nobis vero ad intellectum pectus angustum est, et ideo sic eum digne aestimamus, dum inaestimabilem dicimus. Eloquar quemad-
- 9

---

<sup>a</sup> The story is from Herodotus, iii. 84. Darius was chosen monarch, as the satrap whose horse was the first to neigh.

<sup>b</sup> Eteocles and Polynices ruled Thebes alternately. The quarrel that resulted brought about the War of the Seven against Thebes, and the death of the twin brothers in single combat.

<sup>c</sup> The *Casa Romuli*, the thatched hut in which the twin brothers were supposed to have lived prior to the founding of the kingdom, was preserved as a cherished relic on the Palatine. [Prop. ii. 16. 20 ; iv. 1. 10.]

if you think of earthly dominions, which surely have analogies with heaven. When has joint monarchy ever started in good faith, or ended without bloodshed? I need not refer to Persians, choosing their ruler by omen of a horse's <sup>a</sup> neigh, nor to the dead and buried legend of the Theban brothers.<sup>b</sup> Who does not know the story of the twins fighting for kingship over a few shepherds and a hut? <sup>c</sup> Wars waged between son-in-law and father-in-law <sup>d</sup> spread over the whole world, and the fortunes of a world empire could not find room for two.

"Look where you will: bees have but one king, 7 flocks one leader, cattle one monarch of the herd. Can you suppose that in heaven the supreme power is divided, that the prerogative of true and divine authority is sundered, when it is plain that God, the author of all, has neither beginning nor end; God, who brings all to birth, to himself gave perpetuity; who, before the world was, was to himself the world; who by his word calls into being all things that are, orders them by his wisdom, and perfects them by his goodness?

"God cannot be seen—he is too bright for sight; 8 nor grasped—he is too pure for touch; nor measured—for he is beyond all sense, infinite, measureless, his dimensions known to himself alone. Too narrow is our breast to take him in, therefore we can only measure him aright in calling him immeasurable. As 9

<sup>a</sup> In 59 B.C. Pompeius married Julia, daughter of C. Julius Caesar. The epigram is from Lucan, *Phars.* i. 110:

populique potentis  
quae mare, quae terras, quae totum possidet orbem  
non cepit fortuna duos.

Just above he has referred to the "nulla fides regni sociis" of Lucan, i. 92.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

modum sentio : magnitudinem dei qui se putat nosse, minuit ; qui non vult minuere, non novit.

- 10 “ Nec nomen deo quaeras : deus nomen est. Illic vocabulis opus est, cum per singulos propriis appellationum insignibus multitudo dirimenda est : deo, qui solus est, dei vocabulum totum est. Quem si patrem dixerō, carnalem opineris ; si regem, terrenum suspiceris ; si dominum, intelleges utique mortalem. Aufer additamenta nominum et perspicies eius claritatem.

- 11 “ Quid quod omnium de isto habeo consensum ? Audio vulgus : cum ad caelum manus tendunt, nihil aliud quam ‘ deum ’ dicunt et ‘ deus magnus est ’ et ‘ deus verus est ’ et ‘ si deus dederit.’ Vulgi iste naturalis sermo est an Christiani confitentis oratio ? Et qui Iovem principem volunt, falluntur in nomine, sed de una potestate consentiunt.

- 1 XIX. “ Audio poetas quoque unum patrem divum atque hominum praedicantes, et talem esse mortaliū mentem qualem parens omnium diem duxerit.
- 2 Quid ? Mantuanus Maro nonne apertius, proximius, verius ‘ principio ’ ait ‘ caelum ac terras ’ et cetera mundi membra ‘ spiritus intus alit et infusa mens agitāt, inde hominum pecudumque genus ’ et quicquid aliud animalium ? Idem alio loco mentem istam et spiritum deum nominat. Haec enim verba sunt :

---

<sup>a</sup> Homer, *Od.* xviii. 136.

<sup>b</sup> The Virgilian lines referred to are combined from *Georg.* iv. 221, *Aen.* i. 743, and vi. 724-729.

I feel, so will I speak ; he who thinks he knows the greatness of God, makes it less ; he who would not lessen it, knows it not.

“ Seek not a name for God : God is his name. Terms 10 are needed when individuals have to be distinguished from the mass, by proper marks and designations : for God, who alone is, the term ‘ God ’ sums all. Should I call him ‘ Father,’ you would think of flesh ; or ‘ King,’ you would reduce him to this world ; or ‘ Lord,’ you will surely deem him mortal. Away with names and appanages, and you will see him in his splendour.

“ Herein do I not command the assent of all ? List 11 to the common crowd : when they stretch forth their hands to heaven, they utter no other word but ‘ God,’ or ‘ God is great,’ or ‘ God is true,’ or ‘ if God grant it.’ Is that the natural language of the crowd, or the formulary of some confessing Christian ? Even those who would make Jupiter their potentate are mistaken in the name, but on holding to one only power agree.

XIX. “ Poets, too, I hear proclaiming one ‘ Father 1 of Gods and men,’ and saying ‘ Such is the mind of mortals, as the day which the Parent of all ushered in.’<sup>a</sup> Again, does not the bard of Mantua<sup>b</sup> say in 2 terms more plain, more pointed and more true, that ‘ in the beginning Heaven and earth ’ and the other portions of the universe, ‘ a spirit within nourishes, and a mind infused stirs them : thence springs the race of men and of the flocks,’ and whatsoever living things there are ? And in another place he gives to mind and spirit the name of God. For these are his words :

## MINUCIUS FELIX

deum namque ire per omnes  
terrasque tractusque maris caelumque profundum,  
unde hominum genus et pecudes, unde imber et ignes.

“ Quid aliud et a nobis deus quam mens et ratio et spiritus praedicatur ?

- 3 “ Recenseamus, si placet, disciplinam philosophorum: deprehendes eos, etsi sermonibus variis, ipsis tamen rebus in hanc unam coire et conspirare sententiam. Omitto illos rudes et veteres, qui de suis dictis sapientes esse meruerunt. Sit Thales Milesius omnium primus, qui primus omnium de caelestibus disputavit. Is autem Milesius Thales rerum initium aquam dixit, deum autem eam mentem quae ex aqua cuncta formaverit. Esto altior et sublimior aquae et spiritus ratio, quam ut ab homine potuerit inveniri, a deo traditum: vides philosophi principalis
- 5 nobiscum penitus opinionem consonare. Anaximenes deinceps et post Apolloniates Diogenes aëra deum statuunt infinitum et inensum: horum quoque similis de divinitate consensus est. Anaxagorae vero discriptio et motus infinitae mentis deus dicitur, et Pythagorae deus est animus per universam rerum naturam commeans et intentus, ex quo etiam animalium omnium vita carpatur. Xenophanen notum est omne infinitum cum mente deum tradere, et Antisthenen populares deos multos, sed naturalem unum praecipuum, Speusippum vim animalem, qua
- 8 omnia regantur, deum nosse. Quid? Democritus, quamvis atomorum primus inventor, nonne plerumque naturam quae imagines fundat et intellegentiam

---

<sup>a</sup> Thales of Miletus (636-546 B.C.) was first of the Ionian physicists. The summary of philosophic theories is abstracted from Cicero, *N.D.* i. 10-15, and moves on beaten ground.

<sup>b</sup> This reads like an appended gloss.



For God the whole inspires,  
 Earth, and the tracts of sea, and heaven profound  
 Whence comes man's race, herds, rain and fire.

"What else do we too proclaim God to be but mind, reason and spirit?"

"Next, let us, if you will, review the teaching of 3  
 philosophers; you will find them, though in differ-  
 ing phraseology, yet in substance all agreeing, and  
 in harmony upon this one point. I may omit the 4  
 primitives whose dicta earned them the title of  
 'the wise men.' Let us begin with Thales of  
 Miletus,<sup>a</sup> the earliest, and first of all to discuss  
 celestial things. This Thales of Miletus said that  
 water was the first principle, and that God was the  
 mind which formed all things out of water. [Here  
 you have a theory of water and spirit too deep and  
 sublime to have been invented by a man: it was  
 handed down by God.]<sup>b</sup> The opinion of the pioneer  
 philosopher you see is in full accord with ours. Next, 5  
 Anaximenes, and after him Diogenes of Apollonia,  
 posit air as God, infinite and measureless; showing  
 a similar agreement on the nature of the Deity.  
 Anaxagoras regards God as the sphere and move- 6  
 ment of an infinite intelligence; the God of Pyth-  
 agoras is mind pervading and extending through  
 the universe of nature, from which also the life of  
 all things living is derived. Xenophanes, as is 7  
 well known, held God to be the infinite and in-  
 telligent All; Antisthenes that for the people there  
 were many gods, but in nature one presiding over  
 all; and Speusippus recognized God in the vital  
 force that governs all. Once more Democritus, albeit 8  
 the originator of atoms, speaks constantly of nature,  
 the source of mental images, and of intelligence,

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- deum loquitur? Straton quoque et ipse naturam. Etiam Epicurus ille, qui deos aut otiosos fingit aut  
 9 nullos, naturam superponit. Aristoteles variat et adsignat tamen unam potestatem: nam interim mentem, mundum interim deum dicit, interim mundo deum praeficit. Theophrastus etiam variat, alias mundo, alias menti divinae tribuens principatum. Heraclides Ponticus quoque mundo divinam mentem  
 10 quamvis varie adscribit. Zenon et Chrysippus et Cleanthes sunt et ipsi multiformes, sed ad unitatem providentiae omnes revolvuntur. Cleanthes enim mentem modo *naturae atque*<sup>1</sup> *animum*, modo aethera, plerumque rationem deum disserit. Zenon, eiusdem magister, naturalem legem atque divinam et aethera interim interdumque rationem vult omnium esse principium; idem interpretando Iunonem aëra, Iovem caelum, Neptunum mare, ignem esse Vulcanum et ceteros similiter vulgi deos elementa esse monstrando publicum arguit graviter et revincit errorem.  
 11 Eadem fere Chrysippus: vim divinam rationalem, naturam et mundum, interim et fatalem necessitatem deum credit Zenonemque interpretatione physiologica in Hesiodi, Homeri Orphei que carminibus imitatur.  
 12 Babylonio etiam Diogeni disciplina est exponendi et disserendi Iovis partum et ortum Minervae et hoc genus cetera rerum vocabula esse, non deorum.  
 13 Nam Socraticus Xenophon formam dei veri negat videri posse et ideo quaeri non oportere, Ariston Stoicus comprehendendi omnino non posse: uterque maiestatem dei intellegendi desperatione senserunt.

<sup>1</sup> *The inserted words are restored from Cicero, De Nat. Deor. i. 37.*

as God. So Straton, too, of nature. Even Epicurus, whose gods are either unconcerned or non-existent, sets Nature over them. Aristotle, in 9  
 varying terms, assigns a single power; one while speaking of mind, at another of the universe as God; and at another setting God above the universe. Theophrastus similarly varies, assigning the primacy now to the universe, now to a divine intelligence. Heraclides of Pontus, though in varying terms, ascribes to the universe divine intelligence. Zeno, 10  
 Chrysippus and Cleanthes in expositions multiform all revolve around a central Providence. Cleanthes discourses of the mind and soul of nature, or again of aether, or more often of reason, as God. Zeno, his master, will have natural law, which is also divine, occasionally the aether, and sometimes reason, as the first principle of all things; by interpreting Juno as air, Jupiter as heaven, Neptune as the sea, Vulcan as fire, and by showing that the rest of the gods of popular belief are similarly elements, he vigorously assails and refutes the vulgar error. Chrysippus says much the same: he believes in 11  
 divine force, the rational nature of the universe, or sometimes fate and necessity, as God; and he follows Zeno in his naturalistic interpretation of Hesiod, Homer and Orpheus in their poems. Diogenes 12  
 of Babylon again adopts a similar school of teaching in expounding the birth of Jupiter, the production of Minerva and the like, as terms denoting things, not gods. Xenophon, the disciple of Socrates, 13  
 says that the true God's form cannot be seen, and therefore should not be inquired into; Aristo the Stoic, that it is beyond all comprehension: both realizing that the majesty of God is the despair of

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 14 Platoni apertior de deo et rebus ipsis et nominibus oratio est et quae tota esset caelestis, nisi persuasionis civilis nonnunquam admixtione sordesceret. Platoni itaque in Timaeo deus est ipso suo nomine mundi parens, artifex animae, caelestium terrenorumque fabricator, quem et invenire difficile prae nimia et incredibili potestate, et cum inveneris, in publicum dicere impossibile praefatur.
- 15 “Eadem fere et ista, quae nostra sunt, nam et deum novimus et parentem omnium dicimus at numquam publice nisi interrogati praedicamus.
- 1 XX. “Exposui opiniones omnium ferme philosophorum, quibus inlustrior gloria est, deum unum multis licet designasse nominibus, ut quivis arbitretur, aut nunc Christianos philosophos esse aut philosophos fuisse iam tunc Christianos.
- 2 “Quod si providentia mundus regitur et unius dei nutu gubernatur, non nos debet antiquitas inperitorum fabellis suis delectata vel capta ad errorem mutui rapere consensus, cum philosophorum suorum sententiis refellatur, quibus et rationis et vetustatis
- 3 adsistit auctoritas. Maioribus enim nostris tam facilis in mendaciis fides fuit, ut temere crediderint etiam alia monstruosa, mera miracula: Scyllam multiplicem, Chimaeram multiformem et Hydram felicibus vulneribus renascentem et Centauros equos
- 4 fingere, illis erat libenter audire. Quid illas aniles

understanding. Plato deals more frankly with 14 God, and actual things and names; his discourse would be quite divine, were it not sometimes sullied by the intrusion of political bias. For Plato, in the *Timaeus*, God is by virtue of his name the author of the universe, the artificer of soul, the constructor of all things in heaven and earth; hard to discover, as he declares, by reason of his incredible and extraordinary power, and, when discovered, impossible to describe in popular terms.

"The position is pretty much the same as our own; 15 we too recognize God, and call him the parent of all; yet avoid popular expositions except when questioned.

XX. "I have now cited the opinions of almost 1 all philosophers of any marked distinction, all designating God as one, though under great variety of names, so that one might suppose, either that Christians of to-day are philosophers, or that philosophers of old were already Christians.

"But if the universe is ruled by Providence, and 2 directed by the will of a single God, we must not allow an ignorant tradition, charmed or captivated by its pet fables, to hurry us into the mistake of agreement; they are refuted by the opinions of their own philosophers, supported by the authority of reason and of antiquity. Our ancestors were so 3 ready to believe in fictions, that they accepted on trust all kind of wild and monstrous marvels and miracles: Scylla with serpent coils, a hybrid Chimaera, a Hydra replenishing its life from vivifying wounds, Centaurs half-horse half-man, or any other fiction of folk-lore fell upon willing ears. Why recall old wives' tales of human beings changed 4

## MINUCIUS FELIX

fabulas, de hominibus aves et feras et de hominibus arbores atque flores? Quae si essent facta, fierent :  
 5 quia fieri non possunt, ideo nec facta sunt. Similiter *erraverunt* erga deos quoque maiores nostri : improvidi, creduli rudi simplicitate crediderunt. Dum reges suos colunt religiose, dum defunctos eos desiderant in imaginibus videre, dum gestiunt eorum memorias in statuis detinere, sacra faciā sunt quae  
 6 fuerant adsumpta solacia. Denique et antequam commercii orbis pateret et antequam gentes ritus suos moresque miscerent, unaquaeque natio conditorem suum aut ducem inclytum aut reginam pudicam sexu suo fortiolem aut alicuius muneris vel artis repertorem venerabatur ut civem bonae memoriae : sic et defunctis praemium et futuris dabatur exemplum.

1 XXI. "Lege historicorum scripta vel scripta sapientium : eadem mecum recognosces.

"Ob merita virtutis aut muneris deos habitos Euhemerus exsequitur, et eorum natales, patrias, sepulcra dinumerat et per provincias monstrat, Dictaei Iovis et Apollinis Delphici et Phariae Isidis et Cereris Eleu-  
 2 siniae. Prodicus adsumptos in deos loquitur, qui errando inventis novis frugibus utilitati hominum profuerunt. In eandem sententiam et Persaeus philosophatur et adnectit inventas fruges et frugum ipsarum repertores isdem nominibus, ut comicus sermo est 'Venerem sine Libero et Cerere frigere.' Alexander ille  
 3 Magnus Macedo insigni volumine ad matrem suam

---

<sup>a</sup> Materials and argument are drawn chiefly from Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. and ii.

<sup>b</sup> The derivation of gods from distinguished men was specially associated with the *Sacred Register* (*ιερά ἀναγραφή*) of Euhemerus, of the period of Alexander the Great.

into birds and beasts, or into trees and flowers? Had such things happened in the past, they would happen now; as they cannot happen now, they did not happen then. So with our ancestors' attitude to the gods: blind and credulous they yielded simple-minded credence. Devoutly reverencing their kings, while, after death, desiring to see their likenesses portrayed, eager to perpetuate their memories in statues, they formed objects of worship from things designed for consolation. Before the world was opened up by commerce, and nations adopted each others' rites and customs, each individual group revered its founder, or some famous chief, or virtuous queen strong beyond her sex, or the inventor of some social boon or art, as a citizen worthy of remembrance. It was at once a tribute to the dead and an

## XXI.

writings of the learned,<sup>a</sup> 1

and you will recognize the truth of what I say.

"Euhemerus<sup>b</sup> gives a list of gods accepted for their merits or their services; enumerates their birthdays, fatherlands, and places of sepulture, and province by province localizes Dictæan Jupiter, Delphic Apollo, Pharian Isis, and Eleusinian Ceres. Prodicus tells of the apotheosis of men who by travel and the discovery of new fruits conferred blessings upon men. To the like effect Persæus philosophizes in the same sense, and associates the fruits discovered with discoverers of the fruits bearing the same names, as in the comic line: 'Venus, without Liber and Ceres, is a-cold.'<sup>c</sup> Alexander the Great of Macedon in a striking letter to his

<sup>c</sup> The quotation, from Terence, *Eun.* iv. v. 6, is taken from Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* ii. 60.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- scripsit, metu suae potestatis proditum sibi de diis hominibus a sacerdote secretum: illic Vulcanum facit omnium principem, et postea Iovis gentem.
- 4 Saturnum enim, principem huius generis et examinis, omnes scriptores vetustatis Graeci Romanique hominem tradiderunt. Scit hoc Nepos et Cassius in
- 5 historia, et Thallus ac Diodorus hoc loquuntur. Is itaque Saturnus Creta profugus Italia<sup>10</sup> metu filii saevientis accesserat, et Iani susceptus hospitio rudes illos homines et agrestes multa docuit ut Graeculus et politus, litteras imprimere, nummos signare, instrumenta conficere. Itaque latebram suam, quod
- 6 tuto latuisset, vocari maluit Latium, et urbem Saturniam indito de suo nomine et Ianiculum Ianus ad memoriam uterque posteritatis reliquerunt.
- 7 Homo igitur utique qui fugit, homo utique qui latuit, et pater hominis et natus ex homine: Terrae enim vel Caeli filius, quod apud Italos esset ignotis parentibus, proditus, ut in hodiernum inopinato visos caelo missos, ignobiles et ignotos terrae filios nominamus.
- 8 Eius filius Iuppiter Cretae excluso parente regnavit, illic obiit, illic filios habuit: adhuc antrum Iovis visitur et sepulcrum eius ostenditur, et ipsis sacris suis humanitatis arguitur.
- 9 "Otiosum est ire per singulos et totam seriem generis istius explicare, cum in primis parentibus probata mortalitas in ceteros ipso ordine successionis influxerit. Nisi forte post mortem deos fingitis, et perierante

---

<sup>a</sup> The authors and the stories referred to are from Tert. *Apol.* 10. Corn. Nepos was a historian contemporary with Cicero; L. Cassius Hemina, an annalist of the second century B.C., wrote a history of Rome to the end of the Punic Wars; Thallus, a historian of the Augustan Age; Diodorus Siculus, in the age of Augustus, compiled world records coming down to the opening of Caesar's Gallic Wars.



mother wrote that he had frightened a priest into betraying to him the secret about deified men; in it he puts Vulcan at the head of the line, and after him the family of Jupiter. Saturn, the fountain-head of this family and clan, all antiquarians, Greek and Roman, treat as a man. So Nepos, and Cassius in his history, and Thallus and Diodorus<sup>a</sup> say the same. Saturn they tell us was a fugitive from Crete, who in terror of his son's violence came to Italy and there received hospitality from Janus; there, as you might expect of a soft and polished Greek, he taught the untutored rustics many arts—the use of letters, coinage, and making of implements. For his hiding-place, where he had found safe hiding, he chose the name of Latium; the Saturnian city, called by his own name, and Janiculum from Janus, have handed down their memory to posterity. Assuredly a mere refugee, and one who lay in hiding, was a man; father of a man, and son of a man; reputed to be son of Earth or Heaven, merely because his parents were unknown to the Italians; just as to this day we speak of unexpected visitants as 'Heaven-sent,' and obscure nonentities as 'sons of Earth.' His son Jupiter, after his father's expulsion, reigned in Crete; there died; there had sons; visits are still paid to the cave of Jupiter, and his grave is shown; and the actual rites observed prove his humanity.

"It is waste of time to go through all one by one, and to trace the whole family line; the mortality which we have proved in the case of their first parents has descended to the rest by order of succession. But perhaps you imagine that men become gods after death; Romulus was made a god by the false

## MINUCIUS FELIX

Proculo deus Romulus, et Iuba Mauris volentibus deus est, et divi ceteri reges, qui consecrantur non ad fidem numinis, sed ad honorem emeritae  
10 potestatis. Invitis his denique hoc nomen adscribitur: optant in homine perseverare, fieri se deos metuunt, etsi iam senes nolunt.

11 "Ergo nec de mortuis dii, quoniam deus mori non potest, nec de natis, quoniam moritur. Omne quod nascitur: divinum autem id est, quod nec ortum habet nec occasum. Cur enim, si nati sunt, non hodieque nascuntur? Nisi forte iam Iuppiter senuit et partus in Iunone defecit et Minerva canuit antequam peperit. An ideo cessavit ista generatio, quoniam nulla huiusmodi fabulis praebetur adsensio?

12 "Ceterum si dii creare possent, interire non possent, plures totis hominibus deos haberemus, ut iam eos nec caelum contineret nec aër caperet nec terra gestaret. Unde manifestum est homines illos fuisse, quos et natos legimus et mortuos scimus.

1 XXII. "Quis ergo dubitat horum imagines consecratas vulgus orare et publice colere, dum opinio et mens imperitorum artis concinnitate decipitur, auri fulgore praestringitur, argenti nitore et candore  
2 eboris hebetatur? Quodsi in animum quis inducat, tormentis quibus et quibus machinis simulacrum omne formetur, erubescet timere se materiem ab  
3 artifice, ut deum faceret, inlusam. Deus enim

---

<sup>a</sup> J. Proculus was a Roman senator, who affirmed that R. had appeared to him in a dream and intimated his desire to be worshipped as the God Quirinus (Livy, i. 16).

<sup>b</sup> When the Spaniards wished to erect a temple to him, the Emperor Tiberius said in the Senate: "I call you to witness, Conscript Fathers, that I am a mortal" (Tac. *Ann.*

oath of Proculus <sup>a</sup>; Juba a god by the vote of the Mauritanians; and so the other kings deified by consecration due not so much to belief in their divinity, as to recognition of greatness and desert. In point of 10 fact they dislike the attribution of the name: they desire to remain men; they are afraid of becoming gods <sup>b</sup>; old though they be, they would rather not.

"The dead cannot become gods, for a god cannot 11 die; neither can those of mortal birth, for everything that is born dies; that which is divine, has neither rising nor setting. If gods are born, why pray are no gods born to-day? Can it be perhaps that Jupiter has become aged, and Juno past child-bearing, and Minerva grey before becoming a mother? Or is it that reproduction has come to an end, because belief in fables of that kind is no longer forthcoming?

"Besides, if gods could procreate and could not die, 12 we should have more gods than all mankind together, and by now there would be no room for them in heaven, no place in the air, no standing ground on earth. And this proves that those gods were men, of whose births we read, and whose deaths we know.

XXII. "Who can doubt that it is to their consecrated 1 images that the common folk offer prayer and public worship, while the fancy and judgement of the uncritical is at the mercy of artistic finish, dazzled by the glitter of gold, lulled to rest by the sheen of silver, and the whiteness of ivory? But if anyone 2 calls to mind the cranks and the machines that go to the shaping of an image, he would blush at the idea of fearing raw matter, which the play of the craftsman's fancy has transformed into a god. A god of 3

iv. 38). Suetonius (*Vesp.* 23) ascribes to the Emperor Vespasian the dying jest, "Vae, puto, Deus fio."

## MINUCIUS FELIX

ligneus, rogi fortasse vel infelicis stipitis portio,  
4 suspenditur, caeditur, dolatur, runcinatur; et deus  
aereus vel argenteus de immundo vasculo, ut saepius  
factum Aegyptio regi, conflatur, tunditur malleis  
et incudibus figuratur; et lapideus *deus* caeditur,  
scalpitur et ab impurato homine levigatur, nec sentit  
suae nativitatis iniuriam, ita ut nec postea de vestra  
veneratione culturam.

5 “Nisi forte nondum deus saxum est vel lignum  
vel argentum. Quando igitur hic nascitur? Ecce  
funditur, fabricatur, sculpitur: nondum deus est;  
ecce plumbatur, construitur, erigitur: nec adhuc  
deus est; ecce ornatur, consecratur, oratur: tunc  
postremo deus est, cum homo illum voluit et dedicavit.

6 “Quanto verius de diis vestris animalia muta naturaliter  
iudicant! Mures, hirundines, milvi non sentire eos sciunt: rodunt, inculcant, insident, ac  
nisi abigatis, in ipso dei vestri ore nidificant; araneae  
vero faciem eius intexunt et de ipso capite sua fila  
7 suspendunt. Vos tergetis, mundatis, eraditis et illos,  
quos facitis, protegitis et timetis, dum unusquisque  
vestrum non cogitat prius se debere deum nosse  
quam colere, dum inconsulte gestiunt parentibus  
oboedire, dum fieri malunt alieni erroris accessio  
quam sibi credere, dum nihil ex his quae timent  
norunt. Sic in auro et argento avaritia consecrata

---

<sup>a</sup> Amasis, of Egypt, constructed a statue of a god out of a gold foot-bath used by himself and his courtiers (Herod. ii. 172).

<sup>b</sup> From Tert. *Apol.* 12. The halo of a saint was originally a round disc put on the head of a statue to prevent defilement

wood, a fragment perhaps of a funeral pile or a gallows-tree, is hung up, sawn, chiselled and planed ; your god of bronze or silver, made as it often was 4 from some dirty vessel for an Egyptian king,<sup>a</sup> is melted down, hammered with mallets, and shaped on anvils ; your god of stone is hewn, carved and polished by some lewd fellow, and is no more aware of the stains upon his birth than he is afterwards of the homage of your worship.

“ Say you the stone, or wood, or silver is not as yet a 5 god ? When then does he come to the birth ? See him cast, moulded, sculptured—not yet is he a god ; see him soldered, assembled, and set up—still not a god ; see him bedizened, consecrated, worshipped ; hey presto ! he is a god—by a man’s will and act of dedication.

“ How much truer the judgement which the dumb 6 animals pass instinctively upon those gods of yours ! Mice, swallows, kites know that they have no feeling ; they gnaw them, perch and settle on them,<sup>b</sup> and (unless you scare them) build in your god’s own mouth ; spiders spin webs across his face, and hang their threads from his head. You wipe, and clean, 7 and scrape, you at once protect and fear the images which you construct ; you all of you forget that a man ought to know his god before he worships him ; you vie in thoughtless obedience to your parents ; you prefer becoming parties to the errors of others, rather than trusting yourselves ; and of the things you fear, you know nothing. Such is the way in which avarice is consecrated in gold and silver, the by birds. So the statue of Priapus says (*Hor. Sat. i. 8.* 37) :

mentior at si quid, merdis caput inguiner albis  
corvorum atque in me veniat mictum atque cacatum . . .

## MINUCIUS FELIX

est, sic statuarum inanum consignata forma, sic nata Romana superstitio.

- 8 "Quorum ritus si percenseas, ridenda quam multa, quam multa etiam miseranda sunt! Nudi cruda hieme discurrunt, alii incedunt pilleati, scuta vetera circumferunt, pelles caedunt, mendicantes vicatim deos ducunt: quaedam fana semel anno adire permittunt, quaedam in totum nefas visere: est quo viro non licet et nonnulla absque feminis sacra sunt, etiam servo quibusdam caerimoniis interesse piaculare flagitium est: alia sacra coronat univira, alia multivira, et magna religione conquiritur quae plura possit  
9 adulteria numerare. Quid? qui sanguine suo libat et vulneribus suis supplicat, non profanus melius esset quam sic religiosus? aut cui testa sunt obscena demessa, quo modo deum violat qui hoc modo placat, cum si eunuchos deus vellet, posset procreare, non facere?
- 10 "Quis non intellegat male sanos et vanae et perditae mentis in ista desipere et ipsam errantium turbam mutua sibi patrocina praestare? Hic defensio communis furoris est furentium multitudo.
- 1 XXIII. "Considera denique sacra ipsa et ipsa mysteria: invenies exitus tristes, fata et funera et luctus atque planctus miserorum deorum. Isis

<sup>a</sup> The votaries of Lycean Pan at the Lupercalia frolics, held on February 15.

<sup>b</sup> The Salii, priests of Mars, carried round the sacred shields (*ancilia*) in solemn procession at the March festival.

<sup>c</sup> The Galli priests of Cybele went their begging rounds, with an image of the Magna Mater. On her worship at Rome see Dill, *Roman Society from Nero*, pp. 547-559.

<sup>d</sup> The rites of the Bona Dea, Ceres and Vesta were restricted to women; those of Hercules to men.

<sup>e</sup> So at the June 11 Festival of Mater Matuta, who was confused with Leucothea, goddess of Dawn.

form and pattern of empty images prescribed, and Roman superstition brought into being.

“Examine into their attendant rites, how ridiculous, 8 how pitiable even they appear! Men running about naked in mid-winter <sup>a</sup>; others marching about in felt caps, or parading old shields <sup>b</sup>; drumming on skins, and dragging their gods to beg from street to street. <sup>c</sup> Some temples may only be entered once a year, some never visited at all. There are rites which a man may not attend, <sup>d</sup> others which may be held only in the absence of women; others where the mere presence of a slave is an outrage needing expiation. <sup>e</sup> For some rites the wreath is laid by a woman with one husband, for others by a woman with several, or ceremonial hue and cry is made for one still more promiscuous in her attachments. Or take the man 9 who pours libations of his own blood, and from his own wounds draws supplication <sup>f</sup>—would he not be better without religion than religious in this fashion? and propitiatory self-mutilation—is it not an insult to God? if God wanted eunuchs, could he not produce, not make them?

“These, anyone can see, are the aberrations, follies 10 and excesses of a disordered mind, and the mere number of those who go wrong supplies mutual securities. General insanity shields itself behind the multitude of the insane.

XXIII. “And lastly, consider the sacred rites of 1 the mysteries: you will find tragic deaths, dooms, funerals, mourning and lamentations of weobegone

<sup>f</sup> Chapter 30 refers to the blood-rites of Bellona. Still more savage were the rites of self-gashing practised by the Galli priests of Cybele at the Attis festivals. *Cf. Tert. Apol.* 23.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

perditum filium cum Cynocephalo suo et calvis sacerdotibus luget, plangit, inquit, et Isiaci miseri caedunt pectora et dolorem infelicissimae matris imitantur ; mox invento parvulo gaudet Isis, exultant sacerdotes, Cynocephalus inventor gloriatur, nec desinunt annis omnibus vel perdere quod inveniunt vel invenire quod perdunt. Nonne ridiculum est vel lugere quod colas vel colere quod iugeas ? Haec tamen Aegyptia quondam nunc et sacra Romana sunt, ut desipias Isidis ad hirundinem et sistrum et adsparsis membris inanem tui Serapidis sive Osiridis tumultum.

- 2 "Ceres facibus accensis et serpente circumdata errore subreptam et corruptam Liberam anxia sollicita
- 3 vestigat : haec sunt Eleusinia. Et quae Iovis sacra sunt ? Nutrix capella est, et avido patri subtrahitur infans, ne voretur, et Corybantum cymbalis, ne pater
- 4 audiat vagitus, tinnitus eliditur. Cybelae Dindyma pudet dicere, quae adulterum suum infeliciter placitum, quoniam et ipsa deformis et vetula, ut multorum deorum mater, ad stuprum illicere non

---

<sup>a</sup> This clause, possibly a gloss, has been transposed in the ms. The cult of Isis, introduced after the Third Punic War, was officially recognized in 43 B.C. Isis was sister and wife of Osiris, who here seems confused with the infant Horus. Cynocephalus is the jackal-headed Anubis, who accompanied Isis in her quest for the remains of the murdered and dismembered Osiris. According to one version of the legend Isis, transformed to a twittering swallow, flew round and round the pillar that marked the grave of Osiris. Ostia was the first cradle and headquarters of the Italian worship of Isis ; but at Rome Domitian built a temple to Isis, and also to Serapis ; and Commodus participated in person in the Isis rites, wearing the linen vestment of votaries, with shaven head and carrying the effigy of Anubis. Dill, *Roman Soc.* pp. 566-584, gives a full description of the cult and ritual.



gods. Isis, with her Cynocephalus and shaven priests, mourning, bewailing and searching for her lost son ; her miserable votaries beating their breasts and mimicking the sorrows of the unhappy mother ; then, when the stripling is found, Isis rejoices, her priests jump for joy, the Cynocephalus glories in his discovery ; and, year by year, they cease not to lose what they find or to find what they lose. Is it not absurd either to mourn your object of worship, or to worship your object of mourning ? Yet these old Egyptian rites have now found their way to Rome, so that you may play the fool to the swallow and sistrum of Isis, the scattered limbs, and the empty tomb of your Serapis or Osiris.<sup>a</sup>

“Ceres, with lighted torches, serpent-girt, with 2  
anxious troubled footsteps follows the trail of her de-  
coyed and ravished Libera<sup>b</sup>—such are the Eleusinian  
mysteries. And what are the rites of Jupiter ? His 3  
nurse is a she-goat ; the infant is withdrawn from his  
greedy sire, for fear he should be eaten ; the tinkling  
cymbals of the Corybants are clashed for fear the  
father should hear his infant wails.<sup>c</sup> Of Cybele and 4  
Dindyma<sup>d</sup> it is a shame to speak : unable to satisfy  
the affections of her luckless paramour—formothering  
of many gods had made her plain and old—she re-

<sup>b</sup> The myth of Persephone, daughter of Eleusinian Demeter (Ceres), was transferred to the primitive Libera of Italian worship.

<sup>c</sup> According to the Cretan legend Jupiter, when rescued from his father Saturn, was suckled by the goat Amalthea. He was hidden away in a cave that his father might not hear his infant cries, and to drown them his votaries, the Curetes (here confused with the Corybantes, priests of Cybele), danced and clashed their cymbals.

<sup>d</sup> Dindyma is the cluster of hills, near Pessinus, where Attis, her Phrygian votary, underwent self-mutilation.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

poterat, exsecuit ut deum scilicet faceret eunuchum. Propter hanc fabulam Galli eam et semiviri sui corporis supplicio colunt. Haec iam non sunt sacra, tormenta sunt.

- 5 “Quid? formae ipsae et habitus nonne arguunt ludibria et dedecora deorum vestrorum? Vulcanus claudus deus et debilis, Apollo tot aetatibus levis, Aesculapius bene barbatus, etsi semper adolescentis Apollinis filius, Neptunus glaucis oculis, Minerva caesiis, bubulis Iuno, pedibus Mercurius alatis, Pan ungulatis, Saturnus compeditis. Ianus vero frontes duas gestat, quasi et aversus incedat; Diana interim est alte succincta venatrix, et Ephesia mammis multis et uberibus extructa, et Trivia trinis capitibus et multis  
6 manibus horrida. Quid? ipse Iuppiter vester modo inerbis statuitur, modo barbatus locatur; et cum Hammon dicitur, habet cornua, et cum Capitolinus, tunc gerit fulmina, et cum Latiaris, cruore perfunditur, et cum Feretrius corona induitur. Et ne longius multos Ioves obeam, tot sunt Iovis mon-  
7 stra quot nomina. Erigone suspensa de laqueo est, ut Virgo inter astra ignita sit, Castores alternis moriuntur ut vivant, Aesculapius ut in deum surgat fulminatur, Hercules ut hominem exuat Oetaeis ignibus concrematur.
- 1 XXIV. “Has fabulas et errores et ab inperitis parentibus discimus, et quod est gravius, ipsis studiis

<sup>a</sup> Saturn was represented with shackled feet, according to the myth that he was so fettered by his son Jupiter.

<sup>b</sup> The Egyptian or Libyan ram-god Hammon was identified with Jupiter.

<sup>c</sup> See on chapter 30 note.

<sup>d</sup> *Spolia Opima*, the arms of a hostile leader slain by the Roman commander in person, were dedicated to Jupiter Feretrius; but the reading here is conjectural.

duced the god to impotence, and in deference to this fable her Galli priests inflict the same disablement upon their bodies. Such practices are not sacred rites, but tortures.

“Again, form and feature bring contempt and 5 mockery upon your gods. Vulcan is lame and crippled; Apollo after years and years still beardless; Aesculapius full bearded, though the son of ever young Apollo. Neptune has sea-green eyes, Minerva grey, like a cat’s, Juno those of an ox; Mercurius has winged feet, Pan hoofs, Saturn feet shackled.<sup>a</sup> Janus has two faces, ready to walk backwards; Diana is sometimes short-kilted for the hunt, while at Ephesus she is figured with many breasts and paps, and as Trivia is a dreadful being with three heads and many hands. Your own Jupiter himself sometimes stands 6 beardless, at others portrayed with a beard; under the name of Hammon,<sup>b</sup> he has horns; Jupiter of the Capitol wields thunderbolts; Jupiter Latiaris is drenched with gore<sup>c</sup>; as Feretrius he wears a wreath.<sup>d</sup> But, not to linger over Jupiters, his phases are as many as his names. Erigone<sup>e</sup> hanged her- 7 self, to shine as Virgo among the stars; Castor and his twin live, by alternate deaths; Aesculapius, to rise to godhead, is struck by lightning; Hercules puts off mortality by being consumed in the flames of Oeta.

XXIV. “Such are the fables and fooleries we learn 1 at our parents’ knees, and—worse still—improve

<sup>e</sup> Erigone, daughter of Icarius, with the help of his faithful dog Maera, found her murdered father’s grave, and in grief hanged herself upon the tree that grew over the tomb. She was translated to the sky as Virgo, Icarius became Bootes, and Maera the dog-star Procyon.

upon by our own studies and training, especially in the works of poets, who have had such fatal influence in injuring the cause of truth. Plato did quite right 2 in excluding Homer, however crowned with praise and honour, from his ideal Republic. For he above 3 all others in his *Iliad*, though half in jest, gave gods a place in the affairs and doings of men ; he matched them as combatants ; drew blood from Venus ; chained up Mars, wounded him and put him to flight.<sup>a</sup> He tells us how Briareus set Jupiter free to save him 4 from being bound by the rest of the gods ; and how, when he could not rescue his son Sarpedon from death, he wept showers of blood ; and that under the spell of Venus's girdle he mated with Juno his wife with more than usual ardour. In another poet 5 Hercules clears out the cow dung, and Apollo tends the flocks for Admetus. Neptune built walls for Laomedon, and the luckless builder got no pay for his job. In another poet Jupiter's thunderbolt is 6 forged on the anvil along with the arms of Aeneas, though heaven and thunderbolts and lightning existed long before Jupiter was born in Crete, and no Cyclops could have imitated the flames of genuine thunderbolts nor Jupiter have failed to fear them. Why should I mention Mars and Venus caught in 7 adultery, or Jupiter's passion for Ganymedes, hallowed in Heaven ? Such stories are but precedents and sanctions for men's vices.

"Choice figments and falsehoods of this kind corrupt 8 the minds of boys ; they grow up to full manhood with these fables sticking in their memory, and unhappily grow old in the same beliefs, though the truth is before their eyes if only they would look for it.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 1 XXV. "At tamen ista ipsa superstitio Romanis  
dedit, auxit, fundavit imperium, cum non tam virtute  
quam religione et pietate pollerent. Nimirum  
insignis et nobilis iustitia Romana ab ipsis imperii  
2 nascentis incunabulis auspicata est! Nonne in ortu  
suo et scelere collecti et muniti immanitatis suae  
terrore creverunt? Nam asylo prius plebs con-  
gregata est: confluxerant perdit, facinerosi, incesti,  
sicarii, proditores, et ut ipse Romulus imperator et  
rector populum suum facinore praecelleret, parricidium  
fecit. Haec prima sunt auspicia religiosae  
3 civitatis! Mox alienas virgines iam desponsatas,  
iam destinatas et nonnullas de matrimonio mulier-  
culas sine more rapuit, violavit, inlusit, et cum earum  
parentibus, id est cum soceris suis bellum miscuit,  
propinquum sanguinem fudit. Quid inreligiosius,  
quid audacius, quid ipsa sceleris confidentia tutius?  
4 Iam finitimos agro pellere, civitates proximas evertere  
cum templis et altaribus, captos cogere, damnis alienis  
et suis sceleribus adolescere cum Romulo regibus  
ceteris et posteris ducibus disciplina communis est.  
5 "Ita quicquid Romani tenent, colunt, possident,  
audaciae praeda est: templa omnia de manubiis,  
id est de ruinis urbium, de spoliis deorum, de caedibus  
sacerdotum.  
6 "Hoc insultare et inludere est victis religionibus  
servire, captivas eas post victorias adorare. Nam  
adorare quae manu ceperis, sacrilegium est conse-

•XXV. "All the same, you say, this so-called super- 1  
 stition gave world-empire to the Romans, increased  
 and established it, for their strength lay not so much  
 in valour as in religion and piety. Say you the noble  
 and majestic fabric of Roman justice drew its auspices  
 from the cradle of infant empire! Yet were they 2  
 not in origin a collection of criminals? did they  
 not grow by the iron terror of their own savagery?  
 The *plebs* first congregated in a city of refuge;  
 thither had flocked ruffians, criminals, profligates,  
 assassins and traitors; and Romulus himself, to  
 secure criminal pre-eminence in office and rule,  
 murdered his own brother. Such were the initial  
 auspices of our religious commonwealth! Next, 3  
 without leave or law, he carried off other men's  
 maidens, some betrothed, some promised, some al-  
 ready married wives, outraged and mocked them,  
 and then went to war with their parents, that is with  
 their own fathers-in-law, and shed kinsmen's blood.  
 Was there ever procedure more irreligious, more  
 outrageous, more cynical in its avowal of crime?  
 Thenceforward it becomes the practice of all suc- 4  
 ceeding kings and leaders to dispossess neighbours  
 of their territory, to overthrow adjoining states with  
 their temples and their altars, to drive them into  
 captivity, to wax fat on losses inflicted, and crimes  
 committed.

"All that the Romans hold, occupy and possess is 5  
 the spoil of outrage; their temples are all of loot,  
 drawn from the ruin of cities, the plunder of gods  
 and the slaughter of priests.

"It is an insult and a mockery to serve vanquished 6  
 religions, first to enslave and then worship the  
 vanquished. To adore what you have seized by

## MINUCIUS FELIX

crare, non numina. Totiens ergo Romanis inpiatum est quotiens triumphatum, tot de diis spolia quot de gentibus et tropaea. Igitur Romani non ideo tanti, quod religiosi, sed quod inpune sacrilegi: neque enim potuerunt in ipsis bellis deos adiutores habere, adversus quos arma rapuerunt. At, quos prostraverant, detriumphatos colere coeperunt: quid autem isti dii pro Romanis possunt, qui nihil pro suis adversus eorum arma valuerunt?

8 “Romanorum enim vernaculos deos novimus: Romulus, Picus, Tiberinus et Consus et Pilumnus ac Volumnus dii; Cloacinam Tatus et invenit et coluit, Pavorem Hostilius atque Pallorem; mox a nescio quo Febris dedicata: haec alumna urbis istius superstitio, morbi et malae valetudines! Sane et Acca Larentia et Flora, meretrices propudiosae, inter morbos Romanorum et deos computandae.

9 “Isti scilicet adversus ceteros, qui in gentibus colebantur, Romanorum imperium protulerunt: neque enim eos adversum suos homines vel Mars Thracius vel Iuppiter Creticus vel Iuno nunc Argiva, nunc Samia, nunc Poena, vel Diana Taurica vel Mater Idaea vel Aegyptia illa non numina, sed portenta iuverunt.

10 “Nisi forte apud istos maior castitas virginum aut religio sanctior sacerdotum, cum paene in pluribus

---

“Romulus, the reputed founder of Rome, was deified as Quirinus; Picus, son of Saturn, a mythical king of Italy, was an agricultural divinity, associated with augury through his sacred bird, the woodpecker; Tiberinus was the deified river Tiber; Consus was associated with the storage of grain; Pilumnus, another rural deity, was patron of millers and bakers; Volumnus brought luck to young children. Acca Larentia, by one account the nurse of Romulus, by

force is to hallow sacrilege, not deities. Each Roman triumph has meant a new impiety, and all trophies over nations new spoliations of the gods. The 7 Romans then have grown great not by religion, but by unpunished sacrilege; for in their actual wars they could not have had the assistance of the gods against whom they took up arms. A triumph over trampled gods is the preliminary to their worship; yet what can such gods do for Romans, when they could not help their own votaries against the arms of Rome?

"The indigenous gods of the Romans we know <sup>a</sup>; 8 Romulus, Picus, Tiberinus, and Consus and Pilumnus and Volumnus; Tatius invented and worshipped Cloacina; Hostilius Pavor (*Panic*) and Pallor; some one or another canonized Febris (*Fever*); such, in superstition, is the foster-child of your city of diseases and maladies. Presumably Acca Larentia too and Flora, prostitutes lost to shame, may be numbered among the diseases—and the gods—of Rome.

"Such forsooth were the powers who carried for- 9 ward the banners of Rome against the gods worshipped by other nations. For Thracian Mars, or Cretan Jupiter, or Juno Argive, Samian and Carthaginian <sup>b</sup> by turns, Tauric Diana, or the Idaean Mother, or the Egyptian monsters rather than deities never took sides for you against their own people.

"But perhaps your virgins were more chaste, or 10 your priests more religious. Nay, but in more of the

others played on the affections of the wealthy, and left her gains to the people of Rome. Flora, Queen of Flowers, was the goddess of fertility in all living things.

<sup>b</sup> The Carthaginian goddess *Tanit*, worshipped under the name *Caelestis*, was regarded as the analogue of Juno.



## MINUCIUS FELIX

- virginibus, ut quae inconsultius se viris miscuissent; Vesta sane nesciente, sit incestum vindicatum, in residuis inopunitatem fecerit non castitas tutior, sed
- 11 inopudicitia felicior. Ubi autem magis quam a sacerdotibus inter aras et delubra conducuntur stupra, tractantur lenocinia, adulteria meditantur? Frequentius denique in aedituorum cellulis quam in ipsis lupanaribus flagrans libido defungitur.
- 12 "Et tamen ante eos deo dispensante diu regna tenuerunt Assyrii, Medi, Persae, Graeci etiam et Aegyptii, cum Pontifices et Arvales et Salios et Vestales et Augures non haberent nec pullos cauea reclusos, quorum cibo vel fastidio res publica summa regeretur.
- 1 XXVI. "Iam enim venio ad illa auspicia et auguria Romana, quae summo labore collecta testatus es et
- 2 paenitenter omissa et observata feliciter. Clodius scilicet et Flaminius et Iunius ideo exercitus perdid-  
derunt, quod pullorum solistimum tripudium ex-
- 3 spectandum non putaverunt. Quid? Regulus nonne auguria servavit et captus est? Mancinus religionem tenuit, et sub iugum missus est et deditus. Pullos edaces habuit et Paulus, apud Cannas tamen cum
- 4 maiore reipublicae parte prostratus est. Gaius Caesar, ne ante brumam in Africam navigia transmitteret, auguriis et auspiciis renitentibus, spreuit: eo facilius et navigavit et vicit.

---

<sup>a</sup> See ch. 7 and notes.

<sup>b</sup> M. Atilius Regulus, the typical patriot, who suffered defeat in the First Punic War, 255 B.C., and surrendered himself into the hands of the Carthaginians to meet his fate.

<sup>c</sup> C. Hostilius Mancinus, consul 137 B.C., was defeated before Numantia; the Senate refused to ratify the terms to which he had agreed, and he was handed over to the enemy.

<sup>d</sup> 216 B.C.

virgins than not, who committed indiscretions with men, no doubt without the knowledge of Vesta, immorality was brought home ; and among the rest impunity resulted not from stricter chastity, so much as more fortunate indulgence. And where are more 11 lewd bargains made, assignations arranged, and adulteries planned, than by priests among the altars and sanctuaries ? Lust gratifies its flames in the chambers of the sacristans more often than in the houses of ill-fame.

“ And after all, under God’s dispensation, before 12 Romans existed, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Greeks too and Egyptians ruled great empires, although they had no Pontiffs, no Arval Brothers, no Salii Vestals or Augurs, no cooped chickens to rule the destinies of state by their appetite or distaste for food.

XXVI. “ I come next to the auspices and auguries 1 which you have laboriously collected and cited, to prove retribution attending on neglect, and success upon observance. Clodius, you say, Flaminius, and 2 Junius lost their armies because they refused to wait till the chickens ate heartily.<sup>a</sup> But what of Regulus <sup>b</sup> ? 3 Did he not observe the auguries ? yet was he not taken captive ? Mancinus did nothing irreligious, yet he passed under the yoke, and was surrendered to the enemy.<sup>c</sup> Paulus’s chickens were in good feed, yet at Cannae<sup>d</sup> he and the greater part of the republic were laid low. When auguries and auspices were 4 adverse to his crossing into Africa before winter, Gaius Caesar disregarded them <sup>e</sup> : as the result both voyage and victory were made easy.

<sup>e</sup> In 47 B.C. C. Julius Caesar crossed from Sicily to Africa, to prosecute the war against the Pompeians.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 5 “Quae vero et quanta de oraculis prosequar? Post mortem Amphiaras ventura respondit, qui proditum iri se ob monile ab uxore nescivit. Tiresias caecus  
6 futura videbat, qui praesentia non videbat. De Pyrrho Ennius Apollinis Pythi responsa confinxit, cum iam Apollo versus facere desisset: cuius tunc cautum illud et ambiguum defecit oraculum, cum et politiores homines et minus creduli esse coeperunt. Et Demosthenes, quod sciret responsa simulata, *φιλιππίσειν* Pythiam querebatur.
- 7 “At nonnumquam tamen veritatem vel auspicia vel oracula tetigerunt. Quamquam inter multa mendacia videri possit industriam casus imitatus, adgrediar tamen fontem ipsum erroris et pravitatis, unde omnis caligo ista manavit, et altius eruere et aperire manifestius.
- 8 “Spiritus sunt insinceri, vagi, a caelesti vigore terrenis labibus et cupiditatibus degravati. Isti igitur spiritus, posteaquam simplicitatem substantiae suae onusti et inmersi vitiis perdiderunt, ad solacium calamitatis suae non desinunt perditum iam perdere et depravati errorem pravitatis infundere et alienati a  
9 deo inductis pravis religionibus a deo segregare. Eos spiritus daemones esse poetae sciunt, philosophi disserunt, Socrates novit, qui ad nutum et arbitrium adsidentis sibi daemonis vel declinabat negotia vel  
10 petebat. Magi quoque non tantum sciunt daemones

---

<sup>a</sup> Amphiaras, foreseeing his own doom if he joined the “Seven against Thebes,” concealed himself. Tempted by the bribe of a necklace, his wife Eriphyle betrayed his hiding-place to Polynices, the claimant to the Theban throne.

<sup>b</sup> The Theban soothsayer, who divined the tragic vicissitudes of Oedipus.

<sup>c</sup> The ambiguous oracle ran “Aio te, Aeacida, Romanos

\* "What, or rather how much, shall I dwell on 5  
oracles? Amphiaraus after death gave responses  
about the future, though he did not know that, for  
a necklace, he would be betrayed by his wife.<sup>a</sup>  
The blind Tiresias <sup>b</sup> saw into the future, though he  
could not see things present. Ennius put together 6  
the responses of the Pythian Apollo <sup>c</sup> about Pyrrhus,  
though Apollo had already ceased to compose in  
verse; and his wary and ambiguous oracle failed as  
men began to be both more educated and less  
credulous. Demosthenes, knowing that responses  
were fabricated, complained of the Pythian priestess  
for 'Philippizing.'

"Yet, on occasion, even auspices or oracles have hit 7  
the truth. Though, among hosts of falsehoods, chance  
may sometimes have worn the semblance of design,  
yet I will try to get to the true source of error and  
perversity, which lies behind the thick darkness,  
expose its roots, and let in the light of day.

"There exist unclean and wandering spirits, whose 8  
heavenly vigour has been overlaid by earthly soils  
and lusts. These spirits, burdened and steeped in  
vices, have lost the simplicity of their original sub-  
stance; as some consolation for their own calamity,  
these lost spirits cease not to conspire for others' loss,  
to deprave them with their own depravity, and under  
the alienation of depraved and heathen superstitions to  
separate them from God. Such spirits are recognized 9  
as 'demons' by the poets, are discussed by philo-  
sophers, and were known to Socrates who, at the  
instigation and will of his attendant demon, declined  
or pursued certain courses of action. The Magi 10  
vincere posse," quoted by Cic. *De Div.* ii. 56. 116, who also  
refers to the dictum of Demosthenes.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- sed etiam quicquid miraculi ludunt, per daemona<sup>s</sup> faciunt : illis adspirantibus et infundentibus prae-  
stigias edunt, vel quae non sunt videri, vel quae sunt  
11 non videri. Eorum magorum et eloquio et negotio  
primus Hostanes et verum deum merita maiestate  
prosequitur et angelos, id est ministros et nuntios,  
dei sedem tueri eiusque venerationi novit<sup>q</sup> adassistere,  
ut et nutu ipso et vultu domini territi contremescant.  
Idem etiam daemona<sup>s</sup> prodidit terrenos, vagos,  
12 humanitatis inimicos. Quid? Plato, qui invenire  
deum negotium credidit, nonne et angelos sine  
negotio narrat et daemona<sup>s</sup>? et in Symposio etiam  
suo naturam daemonum exprimere conititur? Vult  
enim esse substantiam inter mortalem inmortalem-  
que, id est inter corpus et spiritum mediam, terreni  
ponderis et caelestis levitatis admixtione concretam,  
ex qua monet etiam nos amorem informari et inlabi  
pectoribus humanis et sensum movere et adfectus  
figere et ardorem cupiditatis infundere.
- 1 XXVII. "Isti igitur impuri spiritus, daemones, ut  
ostensum magis ac philosophis, sub statu<sup>i</sup>s et imagini-  
bus consecratis delitiscunt et adflatu suo auctoritatem  
quasi praesentis numinis consequuntur, dum in-  
spirant interim vatibus, dum fanis inmorantur, dum  
nonnumquam extorum fibras animant, avium volatus  
gubernant, sortes regunt, oracula efficiunt, falsis  
2 pluribus involuta. Nam et falluntur et fallunt, ut  
et nescientes sinceram veritatem et quam sciunt, in  
perditionem sui non confitentes. Sic a caelo deorsum

---

<sup>a</sup> Hostanes, said to have been the first to write on medical magic, accompanied Xerxes in his 480 B.C. expedition against Greece.

not only know of the demons, but by their aid perform their magical tricks ; by their suggestion and connivance they produce their feats of conjuring, making things visible that *are not*, or things that *are* invisible. Hostanes,<sup>a</sup> whose eloquence and 11 faculty give him first place among the Magi, renders due homage to the true God ; angels, he tells us—ministers and messengers of God—attend the throne of God, and stand by to render worship, trembling and affrighted at the nod and countenance of their Lord. He has borne witness also to demons of the earth, ranging to and fro, the enemies of mankind. Does not Plato too, who accounted it a hard matter 12 to find out God, find it no hard matter to tell of angels and of demons ? in his *Symposium* is he not at pains to define their nature ? He will have it that there is a substance intermediate between mortal and immortal, that is, between body and spirit, compounded of an admixture of earthly weight and heavenly lightness ; out of which he tells us Love is fashioned, and glides into the hearts of men, and stirs their senses, and shapes affections, and instils the ardour of desire.

XXVII. " These unclean spirits, or demons, as re- 1 vealed to Magi and philosophers, find a lurking place under statues and consecrated images, and by their breath exercise influence as of a present God : at one while they inspire prophets, at another haunt temples, at another animate the fibres of entrails, govern the flight of birds, determine lots, and are the authors of oracles mostly wrapped in falsehood. Deceived as well as deceivers, they 2 know not essential truth, and what they know they confess not to their own undoing. Thus they drag

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- gravant et a deo vero ad materias avocant, vitam turbant, somnos inquietant, inrepentes etiam corporibus occulte, ut spiritus tenues, morbos fingunt, terrent mentes, membra distorquent, ut ad cultum sui cogant, ut nidore altarium vel hostiis pecudum saginati, remissis quae constrinxerant, curasse videantur.
- 3 tur. Hinc sunt et furentes, quos in publicum videtis excurrere, vates et ipsi absque templo, sic insaniunt, sic bacchantur, sic rotantur : par et in illis instigatio
- 4 daemonis, sed argumentum dispar furoris. De ipsis etiam illa, quae paulo ante tibi dicta sunt, ut Iuppiter ludos repeteret ex somnio, ut cum equis Castores viderentur, ut cingulum matronae navicula sequeretur.
- 5 “ Haec omnia sciunt pleraque pars vestrum ipsos daemonas de semetipsis confiteri, quotiens a nobis tormentis verborum et orationis incendiis de cor-
- 6 poribus exiguntur. Ipse Saturnus et Serapis et Iuppiter et quicquid daemonum colitis, victi dolore quod sunt eloquuntur, nec utique in turpitudinem sui, nonnullis praesertim vestrum adsistentibus, men-
- 7 tiuntur. Ipsis testibus, esse eos daemonas, de se verum confitentibus credite : adiurati enim per deum verum et solum, inviti, miseri corporibus inhorrescunt et vel exiliunt statim vel evanescunt gradatim, prout fides patientis adiuvat aut gratia curantis adspirat. Sic Christianos de proximo fugitant, quos longe in

---

<sup>a</sup> See ch. 7 notes.

men downwards from Heaven, call them away from the true God to material things, perturb their life, disquiet their slumbers, creep into their bodies covertly, as impalpable spirits, produce diseases, strike terror into minds, distort the limbs, thus driving men to do them worship, in order that, when glutted with the reek of altars or with victim beasts, they may loosen the tightened bonds and claim to have effected a cure. From them too come the maniacs 3 whom you see running into the street, soothsayers without a temple, raving, possessed, and whirling round. There is the same demoniac possession, though the guise of frenzy is different. To them 4 too we may trace delusions already mentioned, Jupiter by a dream claiming the renewal of his games; Castor and Pollux being seen with their horses; and the bark towed by a matron's girdle.<sup>a</sup>

"All this, as most of your people know, the demons 5 themselves admit to be true, when they are driven out of men's bodies by words of exorcism and the fire of prayer. Saturn himself, Serapis, Jupiter, or 6 any other demon you worship, under stress of pain, confess openly what they are; and surely they would not lie to their own disgrace, particularly with some of you standing by. When the witnesses 7 themselves confess the truth about themselves, that they are demons, you cannot but believe; when adjured in the name of the one true God, reluctantly, in misery, they quail and quake, and either suddenly leap forth at once, or vanish gradually, according to the faith exercised by the sufferer or the grace imparted by the healer. Challenged at close quarters they run away from Christians, though at a distance in mixed crowds they set you on to



## MINUCIUS FELIX

8 coetibus per vos lacessebant. Ideo inserti mentibus imperitorum odium nostri serunt occulte per timorem: naturale est enim et odisse quem timeas, et quem metueris infestare, si possis. Sic occupant animos et obstruunt pectora, ut ante nos incipiant homines odisse quam nosse, ne cognitos aut imitari possint aut damnare non possint.

1 XXVIII. "Quam autem iniquum sit, incognitis et  
inexploratis iudicare, quod facitis, nobis ipsis paeni-  
2 tentibus credite. Et nos enim idem fuimus et eadem  
vobiscum quondam adhuc caeci et hebetes sentie-  
bamus, quasi Christiani monstra colerent, infantes  
vorarent, convivia incesta miscerent, nec intellege-  
bamus ab his fabulas istas semper ventilari et num-  
quam vel investigari vel probari, nec tanto tempore  
aliquem existere, qui proderet, non tantum facti  
veniam, verum etiam indicii gratiam consecuturum:  
malum autem adeo non esse, ut Christianus reus nec  
erubesceret nec timeret, et unum solummodo, quod  
3 non ante fuerit, paeniteret. Nos tamen cum sacri-  
legos aliquos et incestos, parricidas etiam defen-  
dendos et tuendos suscipiebamus, hos nec audiendos  
in totum putabamus, ut torqueremus confitentes  
ad negandum, videlicet ne perirent, exercentes in  
his perversam quaestionem, non quae verum erueret,  
4 sed quae mendacium cogeret. Et si qui infirmior  
malo pressus et victus Christianum se negasset,  
400

harry them. Worming their way into the minds of 8 the ignorant, they sow secret hate against us based on fear; for it is natural to hate one you fear, and to launch what attacks you can upon one of whom you are afraid. They seize and close the approaches of men's hearts, to insure their hating us before they know us, for fear that when they know us they may either proceed to imitate or feel unable to condemn.

XXVIII. "How unfair it is to pass judgement, as 1 you do, without knowledge and investigation, a guilty conscience reminds us. We too were once in the 2 same case as you, blindly and stupidly sharing your ideas, and supposing that the Christians worshipped monsters, devoured infants, and joined in incestuous feasts; we did not understand that the demons were for ever setting fables afloat without either investigation or proof; and that all the while no one came forward with evidence, though he would have gained not only pardon for wrong done but also reward for his disclosure; and that, so far from any wrong-doing of any kind, accused Christians neither blushed nor feared, but regretted one thing only, that they had not been Christians before. At the time when we 3 used to undertake the defence and protection of cases of sacrilege or incest or even murders, we regarded Christians as not even entitled to a hearing; sometimes under pretence of pity, with savage cruelty we tortured those who confessed, to make them deny, in order to save their lives; in their case we reversed the usual practice, employing torture not to elicit truth, but to compel falsehood. And if anyone, 4 overcome by the pressure of pain, succumbed and denied his faith, we extended indulgence to him, as

## MINUCIUS FELIX

favebamus ei, quasi eierato nomino iam omnia facta  
5 sua illa negatione purgaret. Adgnoscitisne eadem  
nos sensisse et egisse, quae sentitis et geritis? cum,  
si ratio, non instigatio daemonis iudicaret, essent  
urguendi magis, non ut diffiterentur se Christianos,  
sed ut de incestis stupris, de inpiatis sacris, de in-  
6 fantibus immolatis faterentur. His enim et huiusmodi  
fabulis idem daemones ad execrationis horrorem  
imperitorum aures adversus nos referserunt. Nec  
tamen mirum, cum omnium fama, quae semper in-  
sparsis mendaciis alitur, ostensa veritate consumitur,  
sit et negotium daemonum; ab ipsis enim rumor  
falsus et seritur et foveitur.

- 7 “Inde est quod audire te dicis, caput asini rem no-  
bis esse divinam. Quis tam stultus, ut hoc colat?  
Quis stultior, ut hoc coli credat? Nisi quod vos et  
totos asinos in stabulis cum vestra vel sua Epona  
consecratis et eosdem asinos cum Iside religiose  
decoratis, item boum capita et capita vervecum et  
immolatis et colitis, de capro etiam et homine mixtos  
8 deos et leonum et canum vultu deos dedicatis. Nonne  
et Apin bovem cum Aegyptiis adoratis et pascitis?  
Nec eorum sacra damnatis instituta serpentibus,  
crocodillis, beluis ceteris et avibus et piscibus,  
quorum aliquem deum si quis occiderit, etiam capite  
9 punitur. Idem Aegyptii cum plerisque vobis non  
magis Isidem quam ceparum acrimonias metuunt,  
nec Serapidem magis quam strepitus per pudenda  
corporis expressos contremescunt.
- 10 “Etiam ille, qui de adoratis sacerdotis virilibus ad-  
versum nos fabulatur, temptat in nos conferre quae

---

<sup>a</sup> Epona, patron goddess of horses, asses and mules.

though forswearing the name was in itself enough to purge him of all his misdoings. Do you recognize 5 that what we felt and did was exactly what you feel and are doing now? Whereas, if the decision rested with reason, and not the instigation of a demon, they should rather be pressed not to disavow their Christianity, but to confess to incest and fornication, to unholy rites, and to child-sacrifice. For these are the 6 kind of tales with which these demons have stuffed the ears of the ignorant to excite horror and execration against us. Nor need we be surprised; seeing that scandal, which always feeds on the dissemination of falsehoods, and withers in the light of truth, is the handiwork of demons; for false rumour is their seed-plot and their nursery.

"Hence the gossip which you say you hear about our 7 treating the head of an ass as divine. Who would be foolish enough to worship that? Who more foolish still, to believe in such worship? except perhaps those of you who keep whole asses in your stalls consecrated to your or their Epona,<sup>a</sup> and decorate them ceremonially in company with Isis, or who sacrifice and worship heads of oxen and of wethers, and dedicate gods half-goat, half-man, and lion-headed or dog-headed deities. Do not you join the 8 Egyptians in adoring and feeding the bull Apis? and approve rites instituted in honour of serpents and crocodiles and all the other beasts and birds and fishes, gods whose slaughter is made punishable by death? And yet these same Egyptians, like most of 9 you, stand in no more awe of Isis than of a pungent leek, or of Serapis than of a breaking of wind.

"The man who fakes up stories of our adoring the 10 privates of a priest is only trying to foist his own

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- sua sunt. Ista enim impudicitiae eorum forsitan sacra sint, apud quos sexus omnis membris omnibus prostat, apud quos tota impudicitia vocatur urbanitas, qui scortorum licentiae invident, qui medios viros lambunt, libidinoso ore inguinibus inhaerescunt, homines malae linguae etiam si tacerent, quos prius
- 11 taedescit impudicitiae suae quam pūdescit. Pro nefas ! id in se mali facinoris admittunt, quod nec aetas potest pati mollior nec cogi servitus durior.
- 1 XXIX. “Haec et huiusmodi propudia nobis non licet nec audire, etiam pluribus turpe defendere est : ea enim de castis fingitis et pudicis, quae fieri non crederemus, nisi de vobis probaretis.
- 2 “Nam quod religioni nostrae hominem noxium et crucem eius adscribitis, longe de vicinia veritatis erratis, qui putatis deum credi aut meruisse noxium
- 3 aut potuisse terrenum. Ne ille miserabilis, cuius in homine mortali spes omnis innititur : totum enim
- 4 eius auxilium cum extincto homine finitur ! Aegyptii sane hominem sibi quem colant eligunt : illum unum propitiant, illum de omnibus consulunt, illi victimas caedunt. At ille, qui ceteris deus, sibi certe homo est, velit nolit : nec enim conscientiam suam decipit,
- 5 si fallit alienam. Etiam principibus et regibus, non ut magnis et electis viris, sicut fas est, sed ut deis turpiter adulatio falsa blanditur, cum et praeclaro viro honor verius et optimo amor dulcius praebeatur. Sic eorum numen vocant, ad imagines supplicant, Genium, id est daemonem, implorant, et est eis tutius per Iouis Genium peierare quam regis.

abominations upon us. Indecencies of that kind may be countenanced, where modesty in any kind of sexual relation or exposure is unknown. But 11  
 faugh! . . . their obscenities are more revolting than modern refinement can stomach, or servitude endure.

XXIX. "Such filth and beastliness are an offence to 1  
 our ears; for most the mere mention of them, even in self-defence, is a disgrace; to modest and clean-living folk you impute acts which we should regard as impossible, did you not prove them by your own practices.

"As for the worship of a malefactor and his cross, 2  
 which you ascribe to our religion, you go very far wide of the truth, in supposing that a criminal deserved or that a mortal man had the right to be believed in as God. Pitiable indeed the man whose 3  
 hope is stayed upon a mortal man, with whose death all that he builds on comes to an end! True indeed 4  
 that Egyptians choose a man for their worship; that they propitiate him and him alone; that they consult him on all matters and kill victims in his honour. But though to others he is a god, to himself at least he is a man, whether he like it or no; for he does not impose upon his own consciousness, even if he deludes others. Princes and kings may rightly be hailed as 5  
 great and elect among men, but homage to them as gods is base and lying flattery; honour is the truer tribute to distinction, affection the more acceptable reward to worth. Yet that is the way men invoke their deity, make supplications to their images, pray to their Genius, that is their daemon; and think it safer to swear falsely by the genius of Jupiter than by that of their king.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

6 "Cruces etiam nec colimus nec optamus. V<sup>os</sup>  
plane, qui ligneos deos consecratis, cruces ligneas  
7 ut deorum vestrorum partes forsitan adoratis. Nam  
et signa ipsa et cantabra et vexilla castrorum quid  
aliud quam inauratae cruces sunt et ornatae? Tro-  
paea vestra victricia non tantum simplicis crucis  
8 faciem, verum et adfixi hominis imitantur. Signum  
sane crucis naturaliter visimus in n<sup>ovi</sup>, cum velis  
tumentibus vehitur, cum expansis palmulis labitur :  
et cum erigitur iugum, crucis signum est, et cum  
homo porrectis manibus deum pura mente veneratur.  
Ita signo crucis aut ratio naturalis innititur aut vestra  
religio formatur.

1 XXX. "Illum iam velim convenire, qui initiari nos  
dicit aut credit de caede infantis et sanguine. Putas  
posse fieri, ut tam molle, tam parvulum corpus  
fata vulnerum capiat? ut quisquam illum rudem  
sanguinem novelli et vixdum hominis caedat, fundat,  
exhauriat? Nemo hoc potest credere nisi qui possit  
2 audere. Vos enim video procreatos filios nunc feris  
et avibus exponere, nunc adstrangulatos misero  
mortis genere elidere : sunt quae in ipsis visceribus  
medicaminibus epotis originem futuri hominis ex-  
tinguant et parricidium faciant, antequam pariant.

3 "Et haec utique de deorum vestrorum disciplina  
descendunt : nam Saturnus filios suos non exposuit,  
sed voravit. Merito ei in nonnullis Africae partibus  
a parentibus infantes immolabantur, blanditiis et  
osculo comprimente vagitum, ne flebilis hostia im-

---

<sup>a</sup> This unqualified repudiation of reverence for the Cross goes further than Tert. *Apol.* 16 which also dwells on these fanciful analogies. But the Cross finds little place in Christian symbolism prior to Constantine. The Cross discerned in the mast and spread oars of a ship seems far-fetched, but may be introduced as a touch of local colour.

• “Crosses again we neither worship nor set our hopes 6  
on.” You, who consecrate gods of wood, very possibly  
adore wooden crosses as being portions of your gods.  
For what are your standards, and banners, and en- 7  
signs but gilded and decorated crosses? Your  
trophies of victory show not only the figure of a  
simple cross, but also of one crucified. Quite true we 8  
see the sign of the cross naturally figured in a ship  
riding the swelling waves, or impelled by outspread  
oars; a cross-beam set up forms the sign of the  
cross; and so too does a man with outstretched hands  
devoutly offering worship to God. In this way the  
system of nature leans on the sign of the cross or  
your religion is shaped thereby.

XXX. “I should now like to join issue with the man 1  
who says or believes that we are initiated by the  
slaughter and blood of an infant. Can you think it  
possible that its tender, tiny body should be gashed  
by fatal wounds? that any man alive would sacrifice,  
and spill, and drain the innocent blood of a babe yet  
hardly born? None can believe it, but one capable  
of the crime. Among you I do see newly-born sons 2  
at times exposed to wild beasts and birds, or violently  
strangled to a painful death; and there are women  
who, by medicinal draughts, extinguish in the womb  
and commit infanticide upon the offspring yet un-  
born. Such practices of course follow the precedents 3  
set by your gods<sup>b</sup>; Saturnus did not indeed expose  
his sons, but devoured them. Not without reason in  
some parts of Africa infants were sacrificed to him by  
their parents, and their cries smothered by endear-  
ments and kisses for fear of a victim being sacrificed

<sup>b</sup> These allegations appear with fuller rhetorical detail in  
Tert. *Apol.* 9.



## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 4 molaretur. Tauris etiam Ponticis et Aegyptiæ  
 Busiridi ritus fuit hospites immolare, et Mercurio  
 Gallis humanas vel inhumanas victimas caederē,  
 Romani Graecum et Graecam, Gallum et Gallam  
 sacrificii viventes obruere, hodieque ab ipsis Latiaris  
 Iuppiter homicidio colitur, et quod Saturni filio  
 dignum est, mali et noxii hominis sanguine saginatur.
- 5 Ipsum credo docuisse sanguinis foedere coniurare  
 Catilinam, et Bellonam sacrum suum haustu humani  
 cruoris imbuere, et comitalem morbum hominis
- 6 sanguine, id est morbo graviore sanare. Non dis-  
 similes et qui de harena feras devorant inlitas  
 et infectas cruore vel membris hominis et viscere  
 saginatas. Nobis homicidium nec videre fas nec  
 audire, tantumque ab humano sanguine cavemus,  
 ut nec edulium pecorum in cibis sanguinem noverimus.
- 1 XXXI. "Et de incesto convivio fabulam grandem  
 adversum nos daemonum coitio mentita est, ut  
 gloriam pudicitiae deformis infamiae aspersione  
 macularet, ut ante exploratam veritatem homines a
- 2 nobis terrore infandae opinionis averteret. Sic de  
 isto et tuus Fronto non ut adfirmator testimonium  
 fecit, sed convicium ut orator adpersit: haec enim
- 3 potius de vestris gentibus nata sunt. Ius est apud  
 Persas misceri cum matribus, Aegyptiis et Athenis

---

<sup>a</sup> Lact. i. 21 refers to the sacrifice of a criminal at the *feriae Latinae*, festival of Jupiter of Latium.

<sup>b</sup> According to Sallust and Florus he pledged the conspirators with potations of human blood, but Dio Cassius charges him with slaughter of a human victim.

<sup>c</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 9. Commodus expressly incited the votaries of Bellona to gash their arms for blood of sprinkling; but this contamination of the rites of the Cappadocian Bellona with those of the primitive Sabellian goddess belongs to Imperial times.

in tears. Among the Pontic Tauri and for the Egypt- 4  
 ian Busiris, the custom was to immolate strangers ;  
 for the Gauls, to slay human—or rather inhuman—  
 victims to Mercurius. The Romans, by way of sacri-  
 fice, buried alive a Greek man and woman, and a  
 Gaulish man and woman ; even to-day a human  
 victim is offered to Jupiter Latiaris,<sup>a</sup> and, as becomes  
 the son of Saturn, he battens on the blood of a criminal  
 offender. It was he, I believe, who instructed Cati- 5  
 line <sup>b</sup> to cement conspiracy with a covenant of blood,  
 and Bellona <sup>c</sup> to imbrue her sacrifice with draughts of  
 human blood ; and to heal the falling sickness with a  
 man's blood, a cure worse than the disease.<sup>d</sup> They 6  
 are on a par with those who eat of wild beasts from  
 the arena, fresh glutted with blood and gorged with  
 the limbs and entrails of men.<sup>e</sup> For us it is not per-  
 missible either to see or to hear of human slaughter ;  
 we have such a shrinking from human blood that at  
 our meals we avoid the blood of animals used for  
 food.

XXXI. “The tall story of incestuous banqueting is 1  
 a lying concoction of demons leagued against us  
 to throw the mud of infamous aspersions upon our  
 boasted purity, that before looking into the truth  
 popular opinion might be turned against us by  
 shocking and horrible imputations. In this way 2  
 your own Fronto <sup>f</sup> did not produce evidence as on  
 affidavit, but spattered abuse like an agitator. The  
 truth is such practices originated with your own  
 people. Among the Persians the law approves 3  
 unions with mothers ; in Egypt and at Athens

<sup>a</sup> Celsus and Pliny both refer to draughts of human blood  
 prescribed as a cure for epilepsy.

<sup>e</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 9 enlarges on these horrors.

See 9. 8.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

cum sororibus legitima conubia, memoriae et trāgoediae vestrae incestis gloriantur, quas vos libenter et legitis et auditis ; sic et deos colitis incestos, cum  
4 matre, cum filia, cum sorore coniunctos. Merito igitur incestum penes vos saepe deprehenditur, semper admittitur. Etiam nescientes, miseri, potestis in illicita proruere : dum Venērem promise spargitis, dum passim liberos seritis, dum etiam dominatos alienae misericordiae frequenter exponitis, necesse est in vestros recurrere, in filios inerrare. Sic incesti fabulam nectitis, etiam cum conscientiam non habetis.

5 “At nos pudorem non facie, sed mente praestamus : unius matrimonii vinculo libenter inhaeremus, cupiditate procreandi aut unam scimus aut nullam. Convivia non tantum pudica colimus, sed et sobria : nec enim indulgemus epulis aut convivium mero ducimus, sed gravitate hilaritatem temperamus casto sermone ; corpore castiore plerique inviolati corporis virginitate perpetua fruuntur potius quam gloriantur : tantum denique abest incesti cupido, ut nonnullis rubori sit etiam pudica coniunctio.

6 “Nec de ultima statim plebe consistimus, si honores vestros et purpuras recusamus, nec factiosi sumus, si omnes unum bonum sapimus eadem congregati quiete qua singuli, nec in angulis garruli, si audire nos publice aut erubescitis aut timetis.

marriage with sisters is legal; your legends and tragedies glory in tales of incest, which you read and listen to with relish; the gods you worship have incestuous relations with a mother, a daughter, or a sister. No wonder then that among you cases 4 of the same offence are often exposed, and constantly practised. Without knowing it you may incur the risk of illicit connexions; with promiscuous amours, with children begotten here or there; with frequent exposure of legitimate children to the mercy of strangers, you inevitably return upon your own tracks and go wrong with children of your own. Unwittingly you involve yourselves in a tragedy of guilt.

“On the other hand our modesty lies not in out- 5 ward look, but in soul; of our own free will we cleave to the bond of single marriage; in desire of procreation we are content with one wife or with none. Our feasts are conducted not only with modesty, but in sobriety; for we do not indulge in delicacies, or prolong conviviality with wine; but temper our gaiety with gravity, with chaste conversation. Chaste still more in person, many find in perpetual virginity food for satisfaction rather than for boasting; in a word, so far removed is the desire for unchastity, that to some even chaste connexion raises a blush.

“We do not take our place among the dregs of the 6 people, because we reject your official titles and purples; we are not sectarian in spirit, if in quiet gatherings as in individual intercourse we are of one mind for good; neither are we ‘talkative in corners,’ because you are either ashamed or afraid to give us an open hearing. As for the daily in- 7

## MINUCIUS FELIX

7 “Et quod in dies nostri numerus augetur, non est  
crimen erroris, sed testimonium laudis; nam in  
pulcro genere vivendi et perseverat suus et adcrescit  
8 alienus. Sic nos denique non notaculo corporis, ut  
putatis, sed innocentiae ac modestiae signo facile  
dinoscimus: sic nos mutuo, quod doletis, amore  
diligimus, quoniam odisse non novimus: sic nos,  
quod invidetis, fratres vocamus, ut unius dei parentis  
homines, ut consortes fidei, ut spei coheredes. Vos  
enim nec invicem adgnosceitis et in mutua odia  
saevitis, nec fratres vos nisi sane ad parricidium  
recognoscitis.

1 XXXII. “Putatis autem nos occultare quod colimus,  
si delubra et aras non habemus? Quod enim simula-  
crum deo fingam, cum, si recte existimes, sit dei  
homo ipse simulacrum? Templum quod ei extruam,  
cum totus hic mundus eius opere fabricatus eum  
capere non possit? Et cum homo latius maneam,  
intra unam aediculam vim tantae maiestatis includam?

2 Nonne melius in nostra dedicandus est mente? in  
nostro intimo consecrandus est pectore? Hostias et  
victimas deo offeram, quas in usum mei protulit, ut  
reiciam ei suum munus? Ingratum est, cum sit  
litabilis hostia bonus animus et pura mens et sincera

3 sententia. Igitur qui innocentiam colit, deo sup-  
plicat; qui iustitiam, deo libat; qui fraudibus abstinet,  
propitiat deum; qui hominem periculo subripit,  
optimam victimam caedit. Haec nostra sacrificia,  
haec dei sacra sunt: sic apud nos religiosior est ille  
qui iustior.

4 “At enim quem colimus deum, nec ostendimus nec

crease in our numbers, that is no proof of error, but evidence of merit; for beauty of life encourages its followers to persevere, and strangers to join the ranks. We do in fact readily recognize one another, 8 not as you suppose by some token on the body, but by the sign manual of innocence and modesty; our bond, which you resent, consists in mutual love, for we know not how to hate; we call ourselves 'brethren' to which you object, as members of one family in God, as partners in one faith, as joint heirs in hope. You do not acknowledge one another, amid outbursts of mutual hate; you recognize no tie of brotherhood, except indeed for fratricidal murder.

XXXII. "Do you suppose we conceal our object 1 of worship because we have no shrines and altars? What image can I make of God when, rightly considered, man himself is an image of God? What temple can I build for him, when the whole universe, fashioned by his handiwork, cannot contain him? Shall I, a man, housed more spaciouly, confine within a tiny shrine power and majesty so great? Is not the 2 mind a better place of dedication? our inmost heart of consecration? Shall I offer to God victims and sacrifices which he has furnished for my use, and so reject his bounties? That were ingratitude, seeing that the acceptable sacrifice is a good spirit and a pure mind and a conscience without guile. He 3 who follows after innocence makes prayer to God; he who practises justice offers libations; he who abstains from fraud, propitiates; he who rescues another from peril, slays the best victim. These are our sacrifices, these our hallowed rites; with us justice is the true measure of religion.

"But, you say, the God we worship we neither 4

## MINUCIUS FELIX

videmus. Immo ex hoc deum credimus, quod eum sentire possumus, videre non possumus. In operibus enim eius et in mundi omnibus motibus virtutem eius semper praesentem aspicimus, cum tonat, 5 fulgurat, fulminat, cum serenat. Nec mireris, si deum non vides : vento et flatibus omnia impelluntur, vibrantur, agitantur, et sub oculis tamen non venit ventus et flatus. In solem adeo, qui videndi omnibus causa est, videre non possumus : radiis acies submovetur, obtutus intuentis hebetatur, et si diutius 6 inspicias, omnis visus extinguitur. Quid? ipsum solis artificem, illum luminis fontem possis sustinere, cum te ab eius fulgoribus avertas, a fulminibus abscondas? Deum oculis carnalibus vis videre, cum ipsam animam tuam, qua vivificaris et loqueris, nec aspicere possis nec tenere?

7 “Sed enim deus actum hominis ignorat et in caelo constitutus non potest aut omnes obire aut singulos nosse. Erras, o homo, et falleris : unde enim deus longe est, cum omnia caelestia terrenaque et quae extra istam orbis provinciam sunt, deo plena sint? Ubique non tantum nobis proximus, sed infusus est. 8 In solem adeo rursus intende : caelo adfixus, sed terris omnibus sparsus est ; pariter praesens ubique interest et miscetur omnibus, nusquam eius claritudo 9 violatur. Quanto magis deus auctor omnium ac speculator omnium, a quo nullum potest esse secretum, tenebris interest, interest cogitationibus nostris, quasi alteris tenebris ! Non tantum sub illo agimus, sed et cum illo, ut prope dixerim, vivimus.

show nor see. Nay, but herein is the ground of our belief that we can perceive him, though we cannot see. For in his works, and in the motions of the universe, we behold his ever-present energy; in the thunder and the lightning, in the thunderbolt or the clear sky. It is no cause for wonder if you see not God; 5 wind and storm drive, toss, disorder all things, yet the eyes see not wind and storm. We cannot look upon the sun, which is to all the cause of vision; its rays dazzle our eyesight; the observer's vision is dimmed, and if you look too long, all power of sight is extinguished. How could you bear the sight of the author of the sun himself, the fountain of light, when you turn your face from his lightnings and hide from his shafts? Do you expect to see God with the 6 eyes of flesh, when you can neither see nor lay hold of your own soul, the organ of life and speech?

"But God, you say, heeds not the doings of man, 7 and from his place in heaven can neither visit all nor have knowledge of individuals. There, man, you err, and are deceived. God is never afar; all things in heaven and earth, and those which are beyond the province of this world, are known of God, and full of him. Everywhere he is not merely close at hand, but interfused. Once more direct your thoughts 8 sunward: fixed in heaven, he yet scatters his rays over all lands; equally present everywhere, he mingles and has part in all; and nowhere is his brightness dimmed. How much more is God, the author 9 of all things and the spier-out of all, from whom nothing can be hid, present in darkness and present in that other darkness of our thoughts! Not only do we act under his eye, but with him, I may almost say, we have our life.



## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 1 XXXIII. "Nec nobis de nostra frequentia blandiamur : multi nobis videmur, sed deo admodum pauci sumus. Nos gentes nationesque distinguimus : deo una domus est mundus hic totus. Reges tamen regni sui per officia ministrorum universa noverunt, deo indiciis opus non est : non solum in oculis eius, sed in sinu vivimus.
- 2 "Sed Iudaeis nihil profuit, quod unum et ipsi deum aris atque templis maxima superstitione coluerunt. Ignorantia laberis si, priorum aut oblitus aut inscius, 3 posteriorum recordaris. Nam et ipsi deum nostrum, idem enim omnium deus est, [*dereliquerunt*]<sup>a</sup>—quamdiu enim eum caste, innoxie religioseque coluerunt, quamdiu praeceptis salubribus obtemperaverunt, de paucis innumeri facti, de egentibus divites, de servientibus reges : modici multos, inermi armatos, dum fugiunt insequentes, dei iussu et elementis adnitentibus 4 obruerunt. Scripta eorum relege, vel, ut transeamus veteres, Flavi Iosephi, vel, si Romanis magis gaudes, Antoni Iuliani de Iudaeis require : iam scies, nequitia sua hanc eos meruisse fortunam, nec quidquam accidisse quod non sit his, si in contumacia 5 perseverarent, ante praedictum. Ita prius eos deseruisse comprehendes quam esse desertos nec, ut impie loqueris, cum deo suo captos, sed a deo ut disciplinae transfugas deditos.
- 1 XXXIV. "Ceterum de incendio mundi, aut improvisum ignem cadere aut deficere *umorem* non credere,

---

<sup>a</sup> Judges vii. 22 ; Joshua x. 11.

XXXIII. "Nor need we plume ourselves upon our 1 numbers ; to ourselves we seem many, but to God we are very few. We distinguish nations and tribes : to God the whole world is a single household. Kings know the affairs of their kingdom through the official reports of ministers, but God has no need of signed reports : we live, not only in his eyes but in his bosom. •

"But what did it profit the Jews that they too, 2 with reverence the most scrupulous, worshipped one God with altars and with temples ? ' There you are betrayed into ignorance, if you forget or ignore their earlier history, and remember only the later ; the 3 Jews, so long as they worshipped our God—one God, the same for all—in purity and innocence and holiness—so long as they obeyed his precepts of salvation, grew from a small people to a numberless, from being poor to rich, from being slaves to kings ; few in numbers and unarmed they overwhelmed armed hosts, and at the command of God with the assistance of the elements pursued them in their flight." Read 4 their own writings ; or omitting the ancients, turn to Flavius Josephus ; or, if you prefer Romans, consult Antonius Julianus on the Jews, and you will see that it was their own wickedness which brought them to misfortune, and that nothing happened to them which was not predicted in advance, if they persisted in rebelliousness. You will understand that they de- 5 serted God before he deserted them, and that they were not—as you profanely say—led captive with their God, but were handed over by God as deserters from his disciplines.

XXXIV. "As for the destruction of the world by 1 fire, it is a vulgar error to regard a sudden conflagra-

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 2 vulgaris erroris est. Quis enim sapientium dubitat, quis ignorat, omnia quae orta sunt occidere, quae facta sunt interire, caelum quoque cum omnibus quae caelo continentur, ita ut coepisse, desinere. *Omnem adeo mundum, si solem lunam reliqua astra desierit*<sup>1</sup> fontium dulcis aqua et aqua marina nutrire, in vim ignis abiturum, Stoicis constans opinio est, quod consumpto umore mundus hic omnis ignescet.
- 3 Et Epicureis de elementorum confagratione et mundi ruina eadem ipsa sententia est. Loquitur
- 4 Plato partes orbis nunc inundare nunc alternis vicibus ardescere, et cum ipsum mundum perpetuum et insolubilem diceret esse fabricatum, addit tamen, ipsi artificii deo soli et solubilem et esse mortalem. Ita nihil mirum est, si ista moles ab eo, quo exstructa est, destruat.
- 5 “Animadvertis, philosophos eadem disputare quae dicimus, non quod nos simus eorum vestigia subsecuti, sed quod illi de divinis praedicationibus prophetarum umbram interpolatae veritatis imitati sint.
- 6 “Sic etiam condicionem renascendi sapientium clariores, Pythagoras primus et praecipuus Plato, corrupta et dimidiata fide tradiderunt: nam corporibus dissolutis solas animas volunt et perpetuo manere et in alia nova corpora saepius commear.
- 7 Addunt istis et illa ad retorquendam veritatem, in pecudes, aves, beluas hominum animas redire. Non philosophi sane studio, sed mimi convicio digni ista
- 8 sententia est. Sed ad propositum satis est, etiam

<sup>1</sup> Words have been adapted from Cicero, De Nat. Deor. iii. 37, to supply defects in the ms.

---

<sup>a</sup> As in ch. 19 he refers to the *Timaeus*, 41 A, and a little lower to 42 B. But he seems to confuse Platonic theory

418

tion, or a failure of moisture as incredible. What 2  
 philosopher doubts, or does not know, that all things  
 which have come into being die, that all things  
 created perish, that heaven and all things contained  
 therein cease as they began. So too the universe,  
 if sun, moon and stars are deprived of the fountains  
 of fresh water and the water of the seas, will disappear  
 in a blaze of fire. The Stoics firmly maintain that  
 when the moisture is dried out, the universe must all  
 take fire. And Epicureans hold the same about the 3  
 conflagration of the elements and the destruction of  
 the universe. Plato <sup>a</sup> speaks of parts of the world as 4  
 subject alternately to floods and to fire; and while  
 maintaining that the universe itself was created  
 eternal and indissoluble, adds that only God himself,  
 who created it, can make it dissoluble and mortal.  
 What wonder then if it should be destroyed in its  
 entirety by him who built it up!

“The philosophers, you observe, use the same argu- 5  
 ments as we; not that we have followed their foot-  
 steps, but that they, from the divine predictions of the  
 prophets, have borrowed the shadow of a garbled truth.

“Similarly the more illustrious philosophers, Pyth- 6  
 agoras first, and more particularly Plato, have put on  
 record a perverted half-truth about the conditions of  
 the future life; on the dissolution of the body, the  
 souls alone they hold remain eternal, and usually  
 migrate into other new bodies. And further, to the 7  
 distortion of truth, they add that the souls of men  
 pass into sheep, birds and beasts. Though the theory  
 is more like a pantomime joke than serious philosophy,  
 still it is so far to the point as showing a measure of 8  
 with Stoic doctrines of alternating cycles of flood and fire,  
 and with Pythagorean transmigration.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

in hoc sapientes vestros in aliquem modum nobiscum consonare.

- 9 “Ceterum quis tam stultus aut brutus est, ut audeat repugnare, hominem a deo, ut primum potuisse fingi ita posse denuo reformari? nihil esse post obitum, et ante ortum nihil fuisse? sicut de nihilo nasci licuit, ita de nihilo licere reparari? Porro difficilius est, id quod non sit incipere, quam id quod fuerit iterare.
- 10 Tu perire et deo credis, si quid oculis nostris hebetibus subtrahatur? Corpus omne sive arescit in pulverem sive in umorem solvitur vel in cinerem comprimitur vel in nidorem tenuatur, subducitur nobis, sed deo elementorum custodia reservatur. Nec, ut creditis, ullum damnum sepulturae timemus, sed veterem et meliorem consuetudinem humandi frequentamus.
- 11 “Vide adeo, quam insolacium nostri resurrectionem futuram omnis natura meditetur. Sol demergit et nascitur, astra labuntur et redeunt, flores occidunt et revivescunt, post senium arbusta frondescunt, semina nonnisi corrupta revirescunt: ita corpus in sepulcro, ut arbores in hiberno: occultant virorem ariditate
- 12 mentita. Quid festinas, ut cruda adhuc hieme revivescat et redeat? Expectandum nobis etiam corporis ver est.

“Nec ignoro plerosque conscientia meritorum nihil se esse post mortem magis optare quam credere: malunt enim extinguī penitus quam ad supplicia reparari. Quorum error augetur et in saeculo libertate remissa et dei patientia maxima, cuius quanto iudicium tardum, tanto magis iustum est.

• agreement between your experts and ourselves. Furthermore, who is so stupid or senseless as to venture to maintain that man, originally formed by God, cannot be remade by him anew? that after death there is nothing, just as before birth there was nothing? that as he could be born out of nothing, so he can be reconstructed out of nothing? Besides, it is more difficult to start what does not exist, than to repeat what has existed. Do you suppose that, because a thing is withdrawn from our dull eyes, it is therefore lost also to God? The whole body, whether it crumbles into dust, or is resolved into moisture, or reduced to ashes, or attenuated into smoke, is withdrawn from us, but the elements remain in the keeping of God. We are not, as you imagine, afraid of damage arising from the mode of sepulture, though we adhere to the good old custom of earth-burial.

“And see too how, for our comfort, all nature suggests a future resurrection. The sun dips down and is born again; the stars sink and return; the flowers fall and renew their life; shrubs age and then break into leaf; seeds must decay in order to renew their life. The body in the grave is like trees in winter; they conceal their greenness under a show of dryness. Why press that in raw winter it should revive and return to life? We must wait too for the springtime of the body.

“Many, I am well aware, conscious of their deserts, hope rather than believe that annihilation follows death; they would rather be extinguished than restored for punishment. They are led astray by the impunity allowed them in life, and also by the infinite patience of God, whose judgements though slow are ever sure and just.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 1 XXXV. " Et tamen admonentur homines doctissi-  
morum libris et carminibus poetarum illius ignei  
fluminis et de Stygia palude saepius ambientis  
ardoris, quae cruciatibus aeternis praeparata, et  
2 daemonum indiciis et de oraculis prophetarum cognita,  
tradiderunt. Et ideo apud eos etiam ipse rex  
Iuppiter per torrentes ripas et atram voraginem  
iurat religiose: destinata enim sibi cum suis  
3 cultoribus poenam praescius perhorrescit. Nec tor-  
mentis aut modus ullus aut terminus. Illic sapiens  
ignis membra urit et reficit, carpit et nutrit. Sicut  
ignes fulminum corpora tangunt nec absumunt, sicut  
ignes Aetnaei montis et Vesuvi montis et ardentium  
ubique terrarum flagrant nec erogantur: ita poenale  
illud incendium non damnis ardentium pascitur, sed  
inexesa corporum laceratione nutritur.
- 4 " Eos autem merito torqueri, qui deum nesciunt,  
ut impios, ut iniustos, nisi profanus nemo deliberat,  
cum parentem omnium et omnium dominum non  
5 minoris sceleris sit ignorare quam laedere. Et  
quamquam inperitia dei sufficiat ad poenam, ita  
ut notitia prosit ad veniam, tamen si vobiscum  
Christiani comparemur, quamvis in nonnullis dis-  
ciplina nostra minor est, multo tamen vobis meliores  
6 deprehendemur. Vos enim adulteria prohibetis  
et facitis, nos uxoribus nostris solummodo viri nasci-  
mur: vos scelera admissa punitis, apud nos et  
cogitare peccare est: vos conscios timetis, nos etiam  
conscientiam solam, sine qua esse non possumus:  
denique de vestro numero carcer exaestuat, Chri-  
stianus ibi nullus nisi aut reus suae religionis aut  
profugus.

\* XXXV. "And yet writings of the learned, and 1  
 verses of the poets, warn men of that river of fire, and  
 the flaming circles of the Stygian mere, prepared for  
 eternal tortures, to which the declarations of demons  
 and the oracles of prophets have borne witness. And 2  
 by that token King Jupiter himself makes solemn  
 oath by the burning shores and the black ooze of Styx,  
 with shuddering prescience dreading the punishment  
 for him and his worshippers. And to these torments 3  
 there is neither bound nor end. The fire has skill to  
 burn and to remake, to riddle and yet nourish, the  
 limbs committed to it. As lightnings strike without  
 consuming, and as the fires of Etna and Vesuvius,  
 and volcanoes in other lands, burn on without ex-  
 haustion, so the penal fire does not undo those whom  
 it burns, but feeds on the mangled fuel of bodies  
 unconsumed.

"That those who know not God deserve their tor- 4  
 tures, as impious and unrighteous, none but an  
 atheist doubts ; it is as culpable to ignore as to  
 wrong the parent of all, and Lord of all. And al- 5  
 though unacquaintance with God is sufficient reason  
 for punishment, in the same way that knowledge  
 avails for pardon, yet, if we Christians are compared  
 with you, although in some cases our training falls  
 short of yours, yet we shall be found on a much higher  
 level than you. You forbid adultery, yet practise it ; 6  
 we are born husbands for our wives alone ; you  
 punish crimes committed, with us the thought of  
 crime is sin ; you fear the voice of witnesses, we the  
 sole voice of conscience which is ever at our side ;  
 and finally, the prisons are crowded to overflowing  
 with your following and not a single Christian is there,  
 except on charge of his religion, or as a renegade.



• XXXVI. "And let no one turn for refuge, or ex- 1  
 cause results by appeals to 'Fate.' Fortune may deal  
 her lot, yet the mind is free; and therefore it is  
 man's action, not his position, that is judged. What  
 does 'Fate' mean,<sup>a</sup> but God's 'pronouncement'  
 upon each one of us? With full foreknowledge of the 2  
 factors contained, God determines his pronouncements  
 in accordance with individual deserts and qualities.  
 The rod is not laid upon the condition of birth, but  
 the nature of disposition entails the chastisement.  
 But enough of Fate for the moment; we reserve it  
 for fuller and more complete discussion elsewhere.<sup>b</sup>

"That most of us are reputed poor is no disgrace, 3  
 but a credit, for the mind is relaxed by luxury, and  
 braced by frugality. Yet who can be poor, who is 4  
 free from wants, who does not covet what is another's,  
 who is rich towards God? The poor man is he who,  
 having much, craves for more. I will tell you how I 5  
 look at it: no man can be so poor as he is at birth.  
 Birds have no settled income, the cattle feed from  
 day to day; these things are provided for us, and  
 all these we possess, if we do not covet more. As on 6  
 the highroad he who walks lightest walks with most  
 ease, so on the journey of life more happiness comes  
 from lightening needs by poverty than from panting  
 under a burden of wealth. Yet for a competence, 7  
 put to good use, we may well ask God, and He who  
 owns the whole may indulge us with a portion. We  
 would rather despise wealth than hoard it; inno-  
 cence comes first in our desires, patience in our in-  
 tenties; we would rather be good than prodigal.

"The human and bodily infirmities which we experi- 8

<sup>b</sup> Jerome refers to a reputed treatise *De Fato*, but on grounds of style questions its authenticity.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

non est poena. militia est. Fortitudo enim infirmitatibus roboratur et calamitas saepius disciplina virtutis est; vires denique et mentis et corporis sine laboris exercitatione torpescunt. Omnes adeo vestri viri fortes, quos in exemplum praedicatis, aerumnis suis  
9 inclyti floruerunt. Itaque et nobis deus nec non potest subvenire nec despicit, cum sit, et omnium rector et amator suorum, sed in adversis unumquemque explorat et examinat, ingenium singulorum periculis pensitat, usque ad extremam mortem voluntatem hominis sciscitatur, nihil sibi posse perire securus. Itaque ut aurum ignibus, sic nos discriminibus arguimur.

- 1 XXXVII. "Quam pulchrum spectaculum deo, cum Christianus cum dolore concreditur, cum adversum minas et supplicia et tormenta componitur, cum strepitum mortis et horrorem carnificis inridens inculcat, cum libertatem suam adversus reges et principes erigit, soli deo, cuius est, cedit, cum triumphator et victor ipsi, qui adversum se sententiam dixit, insultat! Vicit enim qui, quod contendit, obtinuit.
- 2 Quis non miles sub oculis imperatoris audacius periculum provocet? Nemo enim praemium percipit ante experimentum. Et imperator tamen quod non habet, non dat: non potest propagare vitam, potest
- 3 honestare militiam. At enim dei miles nec in dolore deseritur nec morte finitur. Sic Christianus miser videri potest, non potest inveniri. Vos ipsi calamitosos viros fertis ad caelum, ut Mucium Scaevolam, qui cum errasset in regem, perisset in hostibus, nisi

ence and suffer are not a punishment, but a school of discipline. For fortitude is braced by weaknesses, and calamity is frequently the school of virtue ; strength, both of mind and body, grows slack without hard training. Your heroes, one and all, whom you quote for our example, won their renown by trials endured. God cannot fail to help us, nor does he 9 disregard, seeing that he is ruler of all and lover of his own ; but in adversities he tries and tests us every one ; weighs each man's disposition in the scales of peril ; proves man's will even to the last extreme of death, with the assurance that in his sight nothing can perish. As gold is tried by fire so are we by ordeals.

XXXVII. "How fair a spectacle for God to see, 1 when a Christian comes face to face with pain, stands matched with threats and punishments and tortures, confronts with a smile the din of death and the hideous executioner, rises to the full height of his liberty in the face of kings and princes, and yields to God alone, Whose he is, as with victorious triumph he defies the judge who has passed sentence on him ! For victory rests with him who wins that which he fought for. What soldier would not face risks more 2 boldly under the eyes of his general ? None takes the prize before facing the ordeal. Yet the general cannot give what is not his ; he cannot grant new lease of life, though he can do honour to good service. But the soldier of God is not forsaken in his pain, 3 neither does death end all. The Christian may seem miserable, but will not so be found. You yourselves extol to the skies victims of misadventure like Mucius Scaevola, who, having failed in his attempt upon the king, would have perished among the enemy, had he

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 4 dexteram perdidisset. Et quot ex nostris, non  
dextram solum, sed totum corpus uri, cremari sine  
ullis eiulatibus pertulerunt, cum dimitti praesertim  
5 haberent in sua potestate! Viros cum Mucio vel  
cum Aquilio aut Regulo comparo? Pueri et mulier-  
culae nostrae cruces et tormenta, feras et omnes  
suppliciorum terriculas inspirata patientia doloris  
6 inludunt. Nec intellegitis, o miseri, neminem esse  
qui aut sine ratione velit poenam subire aut tormenta  
sine deo possit sustinere.
- 7 “Nisi forte vos decipit, quod deum nescientes divi-  
tiis adfluant, honoribus floreant, polleant potestatibus.  
Miseri in hoc altius tolluntur, ut decidant altius. Hi  
enim, ut victimae ad supplicium saginantur, ut hostiae  
ad poenam coronantur: in hoc adeo quidam imperiis  
ac dominationibus eriguntur, ut ingenium eorum  
perditae mentis licentiae potestatis libere nun-  
8 dinentur. Absque enim notitia dei quae potest esse  
solida felicitas, cum mors sit? Somnio similis, ante-  
9 quam tenetur, elabitur. Rex es? Set tam times  
quam timeris, et quamlibet sis multo comitatu  
stipatus, ad periculum tamen solus es. Dives es?  
Sed fortunae male creditur et magno viatico breve  
10 vitae iter non instruitur, sed oneratur. Fascibus  
et purpuris gloriaris? Vanus error hominis et inanis  
cultus dignitatis, fulgere purpura, mente sordescere.

---

<sup>a</sup> When King Porsena of Etruria was besieging Rome G. Mucius entered his camp by stealth, intending to assassinate him, but killed his secretary by mistake. Being seized, and threatened with torture, to show his constancy he put his right hand into the fire on the altar until it was consumed.

<sup>b</sup> Manius Aquilius was in 89 B.C. sent, as Roman legate, to compel Mithradates, King of Pontus, to restore to their respective kingdoms the kings of Bithynia and Cappadocia.

not sacrificed his right hand.<sup>a</sup> How many of our 4  
 number have, without a moan, allowed not their right  
 hand only, but their whole body to be burned to  
 ashes, when it was within their power to win release !  
 Am I comparing *men* only with Mucius or Aquilius, 5  
 or Regulus ? <sup>b</sup> Nay, our boys and tender women are  
 so inspired to sufferance of pain that they laugh to  
 scorn crosses and tortures, wild beasts and all the  
 paraphernalia of punishment. Poor fools ! you do 6  
 not see that without reason no one would voluntarily  
 submit to punishment, or without God's help endure  
 the tortures. •

“ You may be deceived by the fact that men who 7  
 know not God abound in riches, are loaded with  
 honours and set in the seats of authority. Unhappy  
 they, who are raised to high place, that they may  
 fall the lower ! They are like victims fattened for  
 sacrifice, and garlanded for execution : there are  
 men so lifted up by sovereignty and dominion, that  
 in an abandon of unreason, license, and power they  
 freely traffic away their humanity.<sup>c</sup> For, apart from 8  
 a knowledge of God, what solid base has happiness,  
 when—there stands death ! Like a dream, before it  
 is grasped it slips away. Are you king ? You feel as 9  
 much fear as you inspire, and, however numerous  
 your bodyguard, in the presence of danger you are  
 alone. Are you rich ? Yet fortune is ill to trust, and  
 for life's brief journey a big provision-train is more  
 burden than equipment. Are fasces and purples your 10  
 pride ? It is a vain will-of-the-wisp and an empty show  
 of state to shine in purple and be squalid in mind.  
 He fell into the hands of Mithradates, who poured molten  
 gold down his throat. On Regulus see ch. 26.

<sup>c</sup> A scathing description, it would seem, of Commodus.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

Nobilitate generosus es? Parentes tuos laudas. Omnes tamen pari sorte nascimur, sola virtute distinguimur.

- 11 “Nos igitur, qui moribus et pudore censemur, merito malis voluptatibus et pompis vestris et spectaculis abstinemus, quorum et de sacris originem novimus et noxia blandimenta damnamus. Nam in ludis currulibus quis non horreat populi in se rixantis insaniam? in gladiatorii homicidii disciplinam?
- 12 In scenicis etiam non minor furor et turpitudine prolixior: nunc enim mimus vel exponit adulteria vel monstrat, nunc enervis histrio amorem dum fingit, infligit: idem deos vestros induendo stupra, suspiria, odia dedecorat, idem simulatis doloribus lacrimas vestras vanis gestibus et nutibus provocat: sic homicidium in vero flagitatis, in mendacio fletis.
- 1 XXXVIII. “Quod vero sacrificiorum reliquias et pocula delibata contemnimus, non confessio timoris est, sed verae libertatis adsertio. Nam, etsi omne quod nascitur, ut inviolabile dei munus, nullo opere conrumpitur, abstinemus tamen, ne quis existimet aut daemoniis, quibus libatum est, cedere aut nos nostrae religionis pudere.
- 2 “Quis autem ille qui dubitat, vernis indulgere nos floribus, cum carpamus et rosam veris et lilium et quicquid aliud in floribus blandi coloris et odoris est? His enim et sparsis utimur ac solutis et sertis mollibus colla conplectimur. Sane quod caput non coronamus, ignoscite: auram bonam floris naribus ducere, non occipitio capillisve solemus haurire.

Are you of noble lineage? proud of your ancestry?  
Yet we are all born equal; virtue alone gives mark.

“We, whose values rest on morals and on modesty, 11  
have good reason to abstain from the vicious delights  
of your processions and spectacles; we know the  
rites from which they originated and condemn their  
pernicious attractions. At the curule games, who  
would not shrink from the frenzy of the struggling  
mob? or the organized bloodshed of the gladiatorial  
shows? In your stage plays there is the same wild 12  
passion, with indecencies still more prolonged; at  
one a farcer describes or acts adulteries; at another  
an actor expends his forces on the amours which he  
depicts; by masquerading their intrigues, their sighs,  
and their hates, he brings disgrace upon your gods.  
For feigned sorrows he moves you to tears by unreal  
nods and gestures, till in the arena you clamour for  
the bloodshed for which upon the stage you weep.

XXXVIII. “As regards our rejection of the sacrifi- 1  
cial leavings and cups used for libation, it is not a  
confession of fear, but an assertion of true liberty.  
Though everything created, as the inviolable gift of  
God, cannot be made corrupt, yet we abstain from  
participation, to show that we have no truck with  
the demons to whom the libations are poured, and are  
not ashamed of our own religion.

“Who can deny that we delight in the flowers of 2  
spring, when we gather the spring rose and the lily  
and every flower with charm of hue and smell? We  
strew or wear them loose, we twine soft garlands for  
our necks. You must excuse us for not crowning  
our heads; our custom is to sniff sweet flower perfumes  
with our nose, not to inhale them with the scalp or the  
back hair.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

- 3 “Nec mortuos coronamus. Ego vos in hoc magis,  
miror, quemadmodum tribuatis exanimi aut sentienti  
facem aut non sentienti coronam, cum et beatus non  
4 egeat et miser non gaudeat floribus. At enim nos  
exsequias adornamus eadem tranquillitate qua  
vivimus, nec adnectimus arescentem coronam, sed  
a deo aeternis floribus vividam sustinemus: quieti,  
modesti, dei nostri liberalitate securi spem futurae  
felicitatis fide praesentis eius maiestatis animamus.  
Sic et beati resurgimus et futuri contemplatione iam  
vivimus.
- 5 “Proinde Socrates scurra Atticus viderit, nihil se  
scire confessus, testimonio licet fallacissimi daemonis  
gloriosus, Arcesilas quoque et Carneades et Pyrrho  
et omnis Academicorum multitudo deliberet,  
Simonides etiam in perpetuum conperendinet:  
philosophorum supercilia contemnimus, quos cor-  
ruptores et adulteros novimus et tyrannos et semper  
6 adversus sua vitia facundos. Nos, non habitu sapien-  
tiam sed mente praeferimus, non eloquimur magna  
sed vivimus, gloriamur nos consecutos quod illi summa  
intentione quaesiverunt nec invenire potuerunt.
- 7 “Quid ingrati sumus, quid nobis invidemus, si  
veritas divinitatis nostri temporis aetate maturuit?
- 432



“Nor do we place wreaths on the dead. I am surprised at your custom of giving to the dead a torch if he is still conscious, or a wreath if he is no longer so : if he is happy, he needs no flowers, if unhappy, he can take no pleasure in them. Our funeral rites we order with the same quietness as our lives ; we twine no fading crown, but expect from God the crown that blossoms with eternal flowers ; in quietness and modesty, safe in the bountifulness of our God, we keep quick our hope of future happiness with faith in his present majesty. So do we rise again to bliss and live in contemplation of that which is to come.

“For the rest then, let Socrates look to himself ! Socrates, ‘the buffoon of Athens’ (as Zeno called him), who confessed that he knew nothing, though he boasted of the promptings of a deceiving demon ; Arcesilas too, and Carneades, and Pyrrho, and the whole host of the Academics, let them argue on ! and Simonides<sup>a</sup> procrastinate for ever ! we think scorn of the high-brow philosophers, corrupters of youth, adulterers, and tyrants, for ever declaiming against their own pet vices. As for us, the wisdom we display lies not in outward dress, but in the mind ; we do not preach great things, but we live them ; our boast is that we have won what they with the utmost strain have sought, yet could not find.

“What cause have we to be ungrateful or dissatisfied, if the truth of godhead has in this our time come

<sup>a</sup> Referring to the story narrated in ch. 13.

## MINUCIUS FELIX

Fruamur bono nostro et recti sententiam tempere-  
mus : cohibeatur superstitio, impietas expietur, vera  
religio reservetur.”

XXXIX. Cum Octavius perorasset, aliquamdiu nos  
ad silentium stupefacti intentos vultus tenebamus, et  
quod ad me est, magnitudine admirationis evanui,  
quod ea, quae facilius est sentire quam dicere, et  
argumentis et exemplis et lectionum auctoritatibus  
adornasset et quod malevolos isdem illis quibus  
armantur, philosophorum telis retudisset, ostendisset  
etiam veritatem non tantummodo facilem sed et  
favorabilem.

- 1 XL. Dum istaec igitur apud me tacitus evolvo,  
Caecilius erupit : “ Ego Octavio meo plurimum  
quantum, sed et mihi gratulor nec expecto senten-  
tiam. Vicimus et ita : ut improbe, usurpo victoriam.  
Nam ut ille mei victor est, ita ego triumphator erroris.
- 2 “ Itaque quod pertineat ad summam quaestionis, et  
de providentia fateor et de deo cedo et de sectae iam  
nostrae sinceritate consentio. Etiam nunc tamen  
aliqua consubsidunt non obstrepentia veritati, sed  
perfectae institutioni necessaria, de quibus crastino,  
quod iam sol occasui declivis est, ut de toto congruentes  
promptius requiremus.”
- 3 “ At ego, inquam, prolixius omnium nostrum vice  
gaudeo, quod etiam mihi Octavius vicerit, cum  
maxima iudicandi mihi invidia detracta sit. Nec  
tamen possum meritum eius verborum laudibus  
repensare : testimonium et hominis et unius in-

•to completion? Let us enjoy our good things, co-ordinate our sense of right, keeping check on superstition, amending all impiety, and holding fast to true religion.”

XXXIX. When Octavius had thus closed, we kept our eyes fixed on him for a while, in silent amaze. For myself, I was lost in admiration at the way in which by argument and illustration and quotation of authorities he had handled subjects easier to feel than to express, and by the way in which he had disarmed ill-will by the very weapons which the philosophers use for their attack, and had set forth the truth in a guise at once so easy and so attractive.

XL. As I was turning over these thoughts in silence, 1 Caecilius burst out: “Congratulations ever so many, dear Octavius! and a share for me too! I need not wait for the ruling. We are quits, as it stands, for I too have the face to claim a victory! If he has been victorious over me, I too have had my triumph over error.

“On the main issue I admit his pleas for Providence, 2 and his belief in God, and as to the sincerity of your sect—now my own—I am at one. But there remain still some minor difficulties, not contradictions fatal to the truth, but yet requiring more complete elucidation; these—for the sun is already dropping towards its setting—we shall do better to discuss to-morrow, in agreement on general principles.”

“No one of us,” I said, “has cause for heartier 3 satisfaction than I in the victory won by Octavius; it relieves me from the invidious task of passing judgement. But no words of praise are adequate to his deserts. Man’s witness—and that too an individual’s

## MINUCIUS FELIX

firmum est : habet dei munus eximium, a quo et inspiratus oravit et obtinuit adiutus.”

- 4 Post haec laeti hilaresque discessimus, Caecilius quod crediderit, Octavius quod vicerit, ego et quod hic crediderit et hic vicerit.

OCTAVIUS, XL. 3-4

—is but weak ; his gift and his reward is from God, to whose help and inspiration he owes his eloquence and his success.”

Thereupon we went our way cheerful and light-<sup>4</sup> hearted—Caecilius, in belief attained, Octavius, in a victory won, I in my friend's belief and my friend's victory.



## INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

- ABDERA, 335  
 Academics, 23  
 Acca, *cf.* Larentia  
 Achaeans, 75, 137  
 Admetus, 75, 386 note, 387  
 Aeacides, *cf.* Pyrrhus  
 Aemilius, M., *cf.* Scaurus  
 Aeneas, *Aeneid*, 49, 74 note, 75, 139, 387  
 Aesculapius, 75, 125, 200 note, 201, 327 and note, 385, 386 note  
 Africa, Africans, x, xi, xii and note, xiii, xix, 47, 133, 183, 304, 306, 393 and note, 407  
 Agrigentum, 326 note  
 Albinus, Clodius, 163 and note  
 Alburnus, 28 note, 29  
 Alexamenos, 336 note  
 Alexander the Great, 65, 205, 372 note, 373  
 Als, 49 note  
 Alia, 332 note, 333  
 Alypius, 270 note  
 Amalthea, 136 note, 338 note  
 Amasis, 378 note  
 Amazons, 143  
 America, xii, xxvii  
 Ammianus Marcellinus, 252 note  
 Amphiaras, 394 note, 395  
 Anacharsis, 7  
 Anaphe, 183  
 Anaxagoras, 205, 367  
 Anaxarchus, 225  
 Anaximenes, 367  
 Ancharia, 135  
 Ancus Marcius, 247  
 Antinous, 73 note  
 Antisthenes, 367  
 Antoninus Pius, *cf.* Pius  
 Anubis, 34 note, 77, 382 note, 383  
 Apaturia, 179  
 Apicius, 22 note, 23  
 Apion, 99  
 Apis, 403  
 Apocalypse, 154 note  
 Apollo, 75, 121, 200 note, 201, 249, 261 and note, 263, 329 note, 373, 385, 387, 395  
 Apollonia, 367  
 Apollonius, 46 note  
 Apuleius, xi, xx, 78 note  
 Aquilius, Manius, 428 note, 429  
 Arabia, Araby, Arabians, 81, 133, 193  
 Arcesilas, 346 note, 347, 433  
 Argos, Argives, 93, 99, 115, 207, 255, 327 note, 391  
 Aristaeus, Aristaeas, 92 note, 93  
 Aristarchus, 23  
 Aristides, 65  
 Aristippus, 205  
 Aristo the Stoic, 369  
 Aristogiton, 224 note  
 Aristotle, 61 note, 205 and note, 369  
 Arnobius, xii, 304, 313  
 Arnold, Matthew, x, xi  
 Artemis, 224 note, 328 note  
 Arvales (Fratres), 162 note, 393  
 Asclepiodotus, 125  
 Asclepius, *cf.* Aesculapius  
 Asculum, 135  
 Ashtarothe, *cf.* Astarte  
 Asia, 183, 245  
 Asia Minor, 330 note  
 Assyria, Assyrians, 143, 393  
 Astarte, 124 note, 133, 328 note, 329  
 Atargatis, 132 note  
 Ateius, 333 note  
 Athenaeus, 92 note  
 Athens, Athenians, 83, 115, 179, 326 note, 327 note, 335 and note, 409, 433

# INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

Atlantic, 183  
 Atlantis, 182 note  
 Attica, 59  
 Attis or Atys, 79, 381 note, 383 note  
 Augurs, 393  
 Augustine, St., xii, xiv, xvii, 244 note  
 Augustus (emperor), 157  
 Aulus Gellius, 246 note  
 Aurelius, M. (emperor), xi, 80 note, 81, 137, 163 note, 338 note  
 BABYLON, Babylonians, 100 note, 148, 369  
 Bacchanal, 169  
 Bacchus, 35, 37, 245, 259, 287  
 Barraeus (de la Barre), xxi  
 Belenus, 138  
 Bellona, 51, 381 note, 408 note, 409  
 Belus (Bel or Baal), 95, 328 note, 329  
 Berosus, 99, 100 note  
 Bithynia, 423 note  
 Boeotia, 115  
 Bona Dea, 380 note  
 Bootes, 385 note  
 Brahmins, 190 note, 191  
 Brennus, 332 note  
 Briareus, 387  
 Britain, 62 note, 163 note  
 Bunyan, xxvi  
 Busiris, 409  
 CAECILIUS, Q., *cf.* Natalis  
 Caecilius, M., *cf.* Metellus  
 Caelestis, 391 note  
 Caesar, C. Julius, xii, 210 note, 363 note, 393 and note  
 Callimachus, 186 note  
 Callimicus, 227  
 Camillus, M. Furius, 326 note, 327, 329 note  
 Campania, 185  
 Cannae, 185, 393  
 Capitol, Capitoline, 80, 137, 141, 143, 185, 187, 247, 255, 263, 267, 329, 385 note  
 Cappadocian, 408 note, 428 note  
 Carlyle, T., xiv, xvii, xviii  
 Carneades, 346 note, 347, 433  
 Carthage, 333 note  
 Carthage, Carthaginians, xii, xiv, xvii, 46 note, 124 note, 134 note, 139, 223, 328 note, 329 note, 330 note, 333, 391 and note, 392 note

Casinum, 135  
 Cassius, Avidius, 163 and note  
 Cassius, L., *cf.* Hemina  
 Cassius, Severus, *cf.* Severus  
 Castor, 251, 255, 263, 330 note, 385, 399  
 Catana, 223  
 Catiline, 51, 409  
 Cato the Elder, xv, 65, 176 note, 178 note  
 Cato the Younger, xv, 178 note, 179  
 Celsus, xii, 304, 312, 409 note  
 Ceos, 348 note  
 Ceres, 63, 67, 73, 82 note, 83, 327 and note, 373, 380 note, 383 note  
 Cervantes, xxvi  
 Chaerephon, 201 note  
 Chaldaeans, 99, 145 note, 328 note, 329  
 Chersonese, Tauric, 47, 328 note  
 Chrysippus, 369  
 Cicero, xvii, 65, 134 note, 225 note, 227, 244 note, 304, 310, 322, 326 note  
 Circe, 251  
 Cirta, 306, 307, 338 note, 339  
 Claudia Quinta, 330 note  
 Claudius (emperor), 20, 258 note  
 Claudius, P. (Clodius), *cf.* Pulcher  
 Cleanthes, 107, 369  
 Clement of Alexandria, xiii, xix, 48 note  
 Clement of Rome, 78 note, 150 note  
 Cloacina, 391  
 Coillo, *cf.* Lares  
 Commodus (emperor), 163 note, 338 note, 408 note, 429 and note  
 Constantine (emperor), 406 note  
 Consus, Consualia, 245, 247, 253, 390 note, 391  
 Corinthian, 183  
 Cornelius Nepos, *cf.* Nepos  
 Coronis, 200 note  
 Corybantes, 137, 383 and note  
 Cos, 183  
 Crassus, M. Licinius (triumvir), 65, 333 and note  
 Crete, Cretan, 136 note, 137, 375, 383 note, 387, 391  
 Crimea, 328 note  
 Croesus, 65, 95, 121, 201  
 Ctesias, 44 note, 53  
 Curetes, 383 note  
 Curis, Curitis, *cf.* Quiritis



# INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

Curtius, 331 and note  
Cybele, 67, 71 note, 77, 123 note,  
137, 249, 253, 327 and note, 330  
note, 331, 381 note, 382 note, 383  
and note, 391  
Cyclops, 39, 387  
Cynocephalus, *cf.* Anubis  
Cyprian, xiii, xx, 304, 305  
Cyprus, 328 note  
Cyrene, Cyrenaic, 334 note, 335  
Cyrus, 95

DANAE, 105  
Danaus, 93, 99  
Darius, 95, 362 note  
David, xiii, 289  
Decius Mus, P., 331 and note  
Delos, 183  
Delphi, Delphic, 200 note, 217, 373  
Delventinus, 135  
Demeter, *cf.* Ceres  
Demetrius of Phaleron, 91, 99  
Democritus, 203, 367  
Demosthenes, 65, 395 and note  
Diagoras of Melos, 334 note, 335  
Diana, 73, 77, 267, 329, 385, 391  
Dictaeon, 373  
Dido, xii  
Dindyma, 383 and note  
Dio Cassius, 408 note  
Diodorus Siculus, 57, 374 note, 375  
Diogenes of Apollonia, 367  
Diogenes of Babylon, 369  
Diogenes the Cynic, 76 note, 77,  
179, 203, 227, 280 note  
Diogenes Laertius, 92 note, 204  
note, 280 note  
Diognetus, 312  
Diomedes, 75  
Dionysia, 179, 259  
Dionysius of Syracuse, 205, 225,  
326 note, 327  
Dodgson, C., xxiv  
Domitian (emperor), 30 note, 31, 48  
note, 163 note  
Dorso, C. Fabius, 323 note  
Dracontius, xii  
Druids, 83 note  
Dryden, xxvi  
Dusares, 133 •

ECURRIA, 244 note, 245  
Egypt, Egyptians, 81, 99, (Egypt)  
100 note, 133, 143, 185, 241, 253,

310, 361, 378 note, 385, 391, 393,  
403, 405, 409  
Elea, 225  
Eleusis, Eleusinians, 39, 327 and  
note, 383 note  
Elijah, 285  
Empedocles, 223  
Ennius, 56 note, 395  
Ephesus, 99, 385  
Epicurus, Epicurean, 21, 197, 207,  
209, 312, 322 note, 369, 419  
Epidauros, Epidaurians, 327 and  
note  
Epona, 82 note, 83, 402 note, 403  
Ecurria, *cf.* Ecurria  
Erasistratus, 23  
Erichthonius, 255  
Erigone, 385 and note  
Eriphyle, 394 note  
Eteocles, 362 note  
Ethiopia, 241  
Etna, 223, 423  
Etruria, Etruscan, 141, 185, 244  
note, 245, 423 note  
Euhemerus, 56 note, 136 note,  
372 note, 373  
Euphrates, 361  
Euripides, 74 note  
Eusebius, 28 note

FABIAN gens, 328 note  
Falisci, 135  
Febris, 391  
Felix, *cf.* Minucius  
Feretrius, *cf.* Jupiter  
Fides, 133  
Flaminius, C., 332 note, 333, 393  
Flora, Floralia, 249, 274 note, 391  
and note  
Florus, 408 note  
Fronto, M. Cornelius, xi, 304, 312,  
338 note, 409

GABINIUS, AULUS, 35  
Galilee, 113  
Galli, 380 note, 381, 385  
Ganymedes, 387  
Gaul, Gallic, 47, 184 note, 328 note,  
329, 332 note, 409  
Gehenna, 211  
Gellius, *cf.* Aulus  
Germany, 31  
Gibbon, x and note, xi, xvii, 28  
note, 29 note

# INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

Gomorrha, 185  
Greece, Greeks, xv, 87, 137, 141,  
205, 259, 276 note, 277, 310, 344  
note, 375, 393, 396 note, 409  
Gwatkin, xix

HADRIAN (emperor), 31, 338 note  
Hammon, 384 and note, 385  
Hannibal, 185  
Harmodius, 224 note  
Harpocrates (Har-pe-khrot), 34  
note, 35  
Hebrews, *cf.* Jews  
Hegesippus, 80 note  
Heine, xxvi  
Hemina, L. Cassius, 374 note, 375  
Herachitus, 207  
Herachides (of Pontus), 369

Hermes, *cf.* Mercury  
Herodotus, 51, 117 note  
Hesiod, 116 note, 369  
Hiera, 183  
Hiero, 201 note, 348 note, 349  
Hieromus, 99  
Hilarion, 49 note  
Hippias of Elis, 205 note  
Hippias, son of Pisistratus, 205 and  
note  
Homer, xxvi, 22 note, 99, 369, 387  
Horace, xxvi, 95 note  
Hort, F. J. A., xiii, xvii  
Horus, 34 note  
Hostanes, 396 note, 397  
Hostia, 135  
Hostilius, 77  
Hostilius (king), *cf.* Tullus

ICARIUS, 385 and note  
Ida, 137  
Idæan (Mother), *cf.* Cybele  
*Iliad*, 74 note, 386 note, 387  
Inachus, 99  
India, 191  
Indus, 361  
Iphigenia, 47 note, 328 note  
Isis, 35, 82 note, 285, 373, 382 note,  
383, 403  
Isocrates, xxvi  
Israelites, *cf.* Jews  
Issedones, 51 note

Isthmian, 263  
Italy, Italian, xii, 59, 63, 134 note,  
135, 183, 380 note, 375, 390 note

JANICULUM, 375  
Januarius, *cf.* Octavius  
Janus, Janes, 59, 146 note, 147,  
375, 385  
Jerome, xiii, xvi, 305, 425 note  
Jerusalem, 83, (New) 297  
Jews, Jewish, 31, 39, 81, 91, 95,  
103, 109, 113, 115, 155 note, 185,  
207, 239, 241, 340, 336 note, 341, 417  
Jocasta, 53  
Joseph of Arimathea, 238 note  
Josephus, Flavius, 92 note, 98 note,  
99, 417  
Jove, *cf.* Jupiter  
Juba, 99, 377  
Judaea, 113, 143  
Judas, 299  
Julia, 363 note  
Julianus, Antonius, 417  
Julius Caesar, *cf.* Caesar  
Junius, *cf.* Pullus  
Junius (du Jon), xxi  
Juno, 73, 77, 124 note, 135, 139,  
148 note, 257, 329 note, 369, 377,  
385, 387, 391 and note  
Jupiter, 49, 53, 59, 66, 75, 77, 79,  
92 note, 105, 106 note, 133, 136  
note, 137, 139, 147, 162 note, 163,  
187, 193, 247, 249, 251, 253, 263,  
299, 307, 331, 365, 369, 373, 375,  
377, 383 and note, 384 note, 385,  
387, 391, 399, 405, 408 note, 409,  
423  
Justin, xx, 30 note, 173 note, 305  
Juturna, 330 note  
Juvenal, xii, 156 note

KELLNER, xxv  
Kronos, *cf.* Saturn

LABERIUS, 211  
Lactantius, xii, 304, 305  
Laertius, *cf.* Diogenes  
Lais, 73  
Laodamia, 344 note  
Laomedon, 75, 386 note, 387  
Larentia (Acca), Larentina, 72 note,  
73, 136 note, 137, 139, 390 note, 391  
Lares (Coillo), 247  
Latiaris, *cf.* Jupiter

# INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

**Latinius, T.**, 330 note  
**Latium, Latins**, 330 note, 331 note, 375, 408 note  
**Lentulus**, 77  
**Leucothea**, 380 note  
**Liber, Liberalia**, 63, 67, 245, 259, 373  
**Libera**, 383 and note  
**Libya, Libyan**, 384 note  
**Lucania**, 183  
**Lucian**, xx, 76 note  
**Lucretius**, 304, 322 note  
**Lucullus**, 62 note, 63  
**Luperci, Lupercalia**, 143, 245, 380 note  
**Luther, Martin**, xii  
**Lycurgus**, 25, 203  
**Lydia, Lydians**, 121, 245  
**MACEDON, Macedonians**, 53, 330 note, 373  
**Macrobius**, 329 note  
**Maera**, 385 and note  
**Magi**, 117, 310, 395, 397  
**Magna Mater, cf. Cybele**  
**Magus, Simon, cf. Simon**  
**Mancinus, C. Hostilius**, 392 note, 393  
**Mandeville, Sir John**, 44 note  
**Manetho**, 99, 100 note  
**Manichaeon**, 117 note  
**Mantua**, 365  
**Marcomanni**, 169  
**Marcus Aurelius, cf. Aurelius**  
**Mars**, 75, 245 and note, 247, 257, 263, 287, 307, 380 note, 387, 391  
**Martius, cf. Ancus Martius**  
**Massagetae**, 51 note  
**Mater Matuta**, 380 note  
**Mauretania, Mauretanians**, 135, 377  
**Mayor, J. El. B.**, xxiv, xxv, 28 note, 46 note  
**Medes**, 143, 393  
**Megalenses**, 243  
**Megarians**, 179  
**Melampus**, 115  
**Melos**, 334 note, 335  
**Menander**, 99  
**Menedemus**, 91, 92 note  
**Mercury**, 47, 79, 255, 261 and note, 263, 307, 329, 385, 409  
**Mesopotamia**, 361  
**Messia**, 253  
**Metellus, M. Caecilius**, 28 note

**Metennius**, 35  
**Miletus**, 366 note, 367  
**Minerva**, 63, 71, 77, 79, 255, 261, 263, 369, 377, 385  
**Minos**, 129, 299  
**Minucius, M. Min. Felix**, xii, xx, 304, 305, 306, 308, 309, 317, 321  
**Mithra**, 307  
**Mithradates**, 428 note, 429 note  
**Modius (de Maulde)**, xxi  
**Moors**, xii, 169  
**Moses**, xv, 93, 95, 99, 115, 197  
**Mucius, Q., cf. Scaevola**  
**Murcia, Murcian**, 253  
**Mus, cf. Decius**  
**Musaens**, 115  
**Muses**, 261, 263  
**Mutunus**, 136 note, 137  
**NARNIA**, 135  
**Natalis, Q. Caecilius**, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 311, 315, 317, 321, 349, 351-355, 435, 437  
**Nemean**, 263  
**Nepos, Cornelius**, 57, 374 note, 375  
**Neptune**, 75, 245, 249, 253, 255, 263, 369, 385, 387  
**Nero (emperor)**, 20, 31, 32 note, 48 note, 115, 158 note, 159 note, 160 note, 258 note, 259  
**Nerva (emperor)**, 30 note  
**Nicodemus**, 112 note  
**Niger, Pescennius**, 163 and note  
**Nile**, 183, 361  
**Norici**, 133  
**Nortia**, 135  
**Numa, cf. Pompilius**  
**Numantia**, 392 note  
**Numidia**, 338 note  
**OCRICULUM**, 135  
**Octavius Januarius**, 304-307, 309, 313, 315, 317, 319, 321, 349, 353, 435, 437  
**Oedipus**, 53, 394 note  
**Oehler**, xxii, xxiv, xxv  
**Oenotria, cf. Italy**  
**Oeta**, 385  
**Olympian**, 147, 263  
**Ombrioi**, 244 note  
**Orpheus**, 115, 369  
**Osiris**, 332 note, 333  
**Ostia**, 307, 317, 332 note  
**Othello**, 44 note

# INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

Ovid, 304

PALATINE, 362 note

Palestine, 29, 185

Pallas (Athena), 83

Pallor, 391

Pan, 380 note, 385

Paradise, 211

Parthenius, 163 and note

Parthia, Parthians, 169, 333 and note

Patmos, 66 note

Paul, St., Pauline, xii, xvii, 155 note, 276 note, 312

Paulus, 393

Pausanias, 88 note

Pavor, 391

Persaeus, 373

Persephone, 383 note

Perseus, 330 note, 331

Persians, 53, 85, 363, 393, 409

Pertinax (emperor), 163 note

Pessinus, 79, 330 note, 383 note

Phaethon, 77 note

Phalaris, 326 note, 327

Phaleron, Demetrius of, *cf.* Demetrius

Pharian, 82 note, 83, 373

Phoenicians, 99, 124 note, 328 note

Phrygia, Phrygians, xi, 310, 327 and note, 383 note

Phryne, 73, 137, 203

Picus, 391 note, 392

Pieria, 115

Pilate, *cf.* Pontius Pilate

Plumnus, 390 note, 391

Pindar, 75

Pisistratus, 91, 205 note

Piso, L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi, 246 note, 247

Piso, M. Pupius Calpurnianus, 35

Pius, Antoninus (emperor), 31

Plato, xv, 61 and note, 116 note, 117, 129, 133, 182 note, 183, 201, 203, 205, 307, 369, 387, 397, 419

Platonists, 21, 207, 209

Plantianus, 164 note

Plautus, Plautine, 348 note, 349

Pliny, 10 note, 11, 30 note, 144 note,

172 note, 173 note, 409 note

Plutarch, 116 note, 326 note

Pluto, 79

Pollux, 251, 255, 330 note, 399

Polybius, 244 note

Polyrates, 65

Polynices, 362 note, 394 note

Pompeii, 185

Pompey (Cn. Pompeius Magnus), 65, 83, 258 note, 259, 363 note; (Pompeians) 393

Pompilius, Numa, 115, 117, 141, 247

Pontius Pilate, 28 note, 29 note, 111, 113

Pontus, 63, 125 note, 369, 409, 428 note

Porsena, 428 note

Priam, 99

Priapus, 379 note

Priene, 208

Proculus, J., 113 and note, 376 note, 377

Procyon, 385 note

Prodicus, 373

Prometheus 88 note, 89

Protagoras of Abdera, 335 and note

Protesilaus, 312 note, 345

Prudentius, 256 note, 297 note

Ptolemy of Mendes, 99

Ptolemy Philadelphus, 90 note, 91, 93

Pulcher, P. Claudius, 332 note, 333, 393

Pullus, L. Junius, 332 note, 333, 393

Punic, *cf.* Carthaginian

Pydna, 330 note

Pyrphlegethon, 211

Pyrrho, 237, 433

Pyrrhus, 121, 394 note, 395

Pythagoras, 61, 203, 367, 419 and note

Pythagoreans, 21, 207, 209, 367

Pythian, 395

QUINDECENVIRI, 143

Quirinal, 328 note

Quirinus, 247, 257, 376 note, 390 note

Quiritis, 134 note, 135

RED SEA, xvi

Regillus (Lake), 330 note

Regulus, M. Atilius, 223, 392 note, 393, 429 and note

Remus, 72 note

Rhadamanthus, 129, 299

Rhodes, 183

Robigo, 247

Rome, Romans, xii, 29, 115, 131, 134 note, 135, 137, 141, 143, 150

# INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

- note, 154 note, 155 note, 162 note, 163, 167, 184 note, 185, 222 note, 244 note, 245, 247, 250 note, 257, 258 note, 263, 304, 308, 310, 329 and note, 330 note, 331 note, 332 note, 333, 338 note, 341, 345, 374 note, 375, 389, 391 note, 392, 393, 394 note, 409, 417, 428 note
- Romulus, 35, 72 note, 113, 245, 247, 257, 362 note, 375, 389, 391 note, 392
- Rutilius, P. Rufus, 326 note, 327
- 
- SABAEANS, 193
- Sabine, Sabellian, 310, 408 note
- Sahii, 59, 143, 179, 380 note, 393
- Sallust, 408 note
- Samaritans, 299
- Samnites, 331 note
- Samos, 189, 391
- Samothrace, Samothracians, 39, 253
- Sarpedon, 75, 387
- Satan, 255
- Saturn, Saturnian, 46 note, 47, 48 note, 57, 59, 61, 71 and note, 85, 95, 139, 285, 307, 375, 383 note, 384 note, 385, 390 note, 399, 407, 409
- Saturnia, Saturnius, 57
- Scaevola, G. Mucius, 223, 427, 428 note, 429
- Scapula, xv, xviii, 226 note
- Scaurus, M. Aemilius, 23 note, 29
- Sciapods, 44 note, 45
- Scipio Africanus, 65, 178 note
- Seius, C., 19
- Seleucus I., 22 note
- Semo sanctus, 72 note
- Seneca, 68 note, 69, 227, 304, 310
- Senones, 184 note, 185
- Serapis, 35, 37, 93, 179, 255, 306, 307, 317, 382 note, 383, 399, 403
- Sessia, 253
- Severus (emperor), 27
- Severus, Cassius, 57
- Sibyl, 96 note, 97
- Sicily, 183, 393 note
- Sidon, 328 note
- Sigerius, 163 and note
- Silvanus, 307
- Simon Magus, 72 note, 73
- Simonides of Ceos, 201 note, 348 note, 349, 433
- Siren, 39
- Sirmium, 137
- Socordius, 125
- Socrates, 65, 75, 117, 178 note, 179, 201, 203, 326 note, 327, 346 note, 347, 369, 395, 433
- Sodom, 185
- Solon, 95
- Souter, A., xxiv, xxv
- Spaniards, 184 note, 376 note
- Sparta, Spartans, 25, 32 note, 33, 203, 207, 225 and note
- Spartianus, 164 note
- Speusippus, 203, 367
- Sterculus, 137, 138 note, 139
- Stesichorus, 255
- Stoics, xv, xvi, 23, 106 note, 172 note, 207, 209, 312, 369, 419 and note
- Styx, 423
- Suetonius, 20 note, 247
- Suidas, 247 note
- Sulla, 65
- Sutrium, 185
- Swift, xvii
- Symposium* (of Plato), 397
- Syracuse, 326 note, 348 note
- Syria, Syrians, 29, 111, 163 note, 310, 329
- TACITUS, CORNELIUS, 81, 159 note
- Tait, 391 note
- Tarpeian, 247
- Tarsus, 276 note
- Tartarus, 65
- Tatius, 391
- Taurus, Taurians, 47, 328 note, 329, 391, 409
- Tertullian, ix-xi, xiii, xiv, xvii, xix-xxvi, 14, 18 note, 20 note, 28 note, 30 note, 36 note, 60 note, 92 note, 102 note, 107 note, 138 note, 151 note, 154 note, 156 note, 172 note, 178 note, 180 note, 185 note, 202 note, 203 note, 205 note, 212 note, 226 note, 234 note, 241 note, 242 note, 250 note, 258 note, 268 note, 272 note, 296 note, 304, 305 and note, 307, 309, 311, 336 note
- Teubner, 313
- Thales, 201, 366 note, 367
- Thallus, 57, 95, 97, 374 note, 375
- Thanatius, 125
- Thebes, Thebans, 207, 362 note, 394 note
- Themistocles, 65

# INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

Theodorus of Cyrene, 334 note, 335  
 Theophrastus, 369  
 Thrace, Thracian, 391  
 Thurii, 203  
 Thyestean, 308  
 Tiber, 162 note, 163, 183, 307, 330  
   note, 390 note  
 Tiberinus, 390 note, 391  
 Tiberius (emperor), 22 note, 28  
   note, 29 and note, 39, 103, 113,  
   158 note, 183, 376 note  
 Tiberius, a proconsul, 46 note, 47  
 Timaeus (the historian), 244 note,  
 245  
*Timaeus* (of Plato), 371, 418 note  
 Tiresias, 395  
 Titans, 95  
 Titus, L., 19  
 Trajan (emperor), 10 note, 11, 30  
   note, 31, 180 note, 144 note, 172  
   note, 173 note  
 Trasimene, 333 and note  
 Trivia, *cf.* Diana  
 Trochilus, 255  
 Trophonius, 115  
 Troy, Trojans, 75, 95, 344 note  
 Tullus Hostilius, 247, 391  
 Tuscan, Tuscany, *cf.* Etruria  
 Tutulina, 253  
 Tyre, 99, 328 note

Tyrrhenus, 245

VALENTIA, 135  
 Varro, 76 note, 244 note, 245  
 Veni, 326 note, 329 note  
 Venus, 75, 77, 257, 258 note, 259,  
   307, 373, 387  
 Verus, Lucius (emperor), 31  
 Vespasian (emperor), 31, 377 note  
 Vesta, 380 note, 393  
 Vesuvius, 423  
 Virgil, 95 note, 304  
 Virgo, xv, xxvi, 385 and note  
 Visidianus, 135  
 Volsinii, 135, 185  
 Volumnus, 390 note, 391  
 Vulcan, 255, 369, 375, 385

WALTZING, xxv, 313, (and critical  
 notes *passim*)

XENOPHANES, 367  
 Xenophon, 369  
 Xerxes, 396 note

ZACHARIAS, Zechariah, 94 note, 95  
 Zeno, xv, 107, 203, 225, 369, 433  
 Zephyrs, 257  
 Zeus, *cf.* Jupiter  
 Zoroaster, 116 note

# THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

## VOLUMES ALREADY PUBLISHED

### LATIN AUTHORS

APULEIUS. THE GOLDEN ASS (METAMORPHOSES). Trans. by W. Adlington (1566). Revised by S. Gaselee. (*4th Impression.*)

AULUS GELLIUS. Trans. by J. C. Rolfe. 3 Vols.

AUSONIUS. Trans. by H. G. Evelyn White. 2 Vols.

BEDE: HISTORICAL WORKS. Trans. by J. King. 2 Vols.

BOETHIUS: TRACTATES AND DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIAE. Trans. by the Rev. H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand. (*2nd Impression.*)

CAESAR: CIVIL WARS. Trans. by A. G. Peskett. (*3rd Impression.*)

CAESAR: GALLIC WAR. Trans. by H. J. Edwards. (*5th Impression.*)

CATULLUS. Trans. by F. W. Cornish; TIBULLUS. Trans. by J. P. Postgate; PERVIGILIUM VENERIS. Trans. by J. W. Mackail. (*9th Impression.*)

CICERO: DE FINIBUS. Trans. by H. Rackham. (*3rd Impression revised.*)

CICERO: DE OFFICIIS. Trans. by Walter Miller. (*3rd Impression.*)

CICERO: DE REPUBLICA AND DE LEGIBUS. Trans. by Clinton Keyes.

CICERO: DE SENECTUTE, DE AMICITIA, DE DIVINATIONE. Trans. by W. A. Falconer. (*3rd Imp.*)

CICERO: LETTERS TO ATTICUS. Trans. by E. O. Winstedt. 3 Vols. (Vols. I. *4th*, II. *3rd*, III. *2nd Imp.*)

CICERO: LETTERS TO HIS FRIENDS. Trans. by W. Glynn Williams. 3 Vols.

CICERO: PHILIPPICS. Trans. by W. C. A. Ker.

CICERO: PRO ARCHIA POETA, POST REDITUM IN SENATU, POST REDITUM AD QUIRITES, DE DOMO, SUA, DE HARUSPICUM RESPONSIS, PRO PLANCIO. Trans. by N. H. Watts.

CICERO: PRO CAECINA, PRO LEGE MANILIA, PRO CLUENTIO, PRO RABIRIO. Trans. by H. Grose Hodge.

## THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

- CICERO: PRO MILONE, IN PISONEM, PRO SCAURO, PRO FONTEIO, PRO RABIRIO, PRO MARCELLO, PRO LIGARIO, PRO DEIOTARO. Trans. by N. H. Watts.
- CICERO: PRO QUINCTIO, PRO ROSCIO AMERINO, PRO ROSCIO COMOEDO, CONTRA RULLUM. Trans. by J. H. Freese.
- CICERO: TUSCULAN DISPUTATIONS. Trans. by J. E. King.
- CICERO: VERRINE ORATIONS. Trans. by L. H. G. Greenwood. 2 Vols. Vol. I.
- CLAUDIAN. Trans. by M. Platnauer. 2 Vols.
- FLORUS. Trans. by E. S. Forster; CORNELIUS NEPOS. Trans. by J. C. Rolfe.
- FRONTINUS: STRATAGEMS AND AQUEDUCTS. Trans. by C. E. Bennett.
- FRONTO: CORRESPONDENCE. Trans. by C. R. Haines. 2 Vols.
- HORACE: ODES AND EPODES. Trans. by C. E. Bennett. (*9th Impression revised.*)
- HORACE: SATIRES, EPISTLES, ARS POETICA. Trans. by H. R. Fairclough. (*2nd Impression revised.*)
- JUVENAL AND PERSIUS. Trans. by G. G. Ramsay. (*5th Impression.*)
- LIVY. Trans. by B. O. Foster. 13 Vols. Vols. I.-V. (*Vol. I. 2nd Impression revised.*)
- LUCAN. Trans. by J. D. Duff.
- LUCRETIVS. Trans. by W. H. D. Rouse. (*3rd Imp. rev.*)
- MARTIAL. Trans. by W. C. A. Ker. 2 Vols. (*3rd Impression, revised.*)
- MINUCIVS FELIX, *cf.* Tertullian.
- OVID: THE ART OF LOVE AND OTHER POEMS. Trans. by J. H. Mozley.
- OVID: HEROIDES, AMORES. Trans. by Grant Showerman. (*3rd Impression.*)
- OVID: METAMORPHOSES. Trans. by F. J. Miller. 2 Vols. (Vols. I. *5th Impression*, II. *4th Impression.*)
- OVID: TRISTIA AND EX PONTO. Trans. by A. L. Wheeler.
- PETRONIVS. Trans. by M. Heseltine; SENECA: APOCOLOCYNTOSIS. Trans. by W. H. D. Rouse. (*5th Impression revised.*)



## THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

- PLAUTUS. Trans. by Paul Nixon. 5 Vols. Vols. I.-III.  
(Vols. I. and III. *3rd Impression*.)
- PLINY: LETTERS. Melmoth's trans. revised by W. M. L.  
Hutchinson. 2 Vols. (Vols. I. *4th*, II. *3rd Imp.*)
- PROPERTIUS. Trans. by H. E. Butler. (*4th Impression*.)
- QUINTILIAN. Trans. by H. E. Butler. 4 Vols.
- ST. AUGUSTINE: CONFESSIONS OF. Trans. by W.  
Watts (1631). 2 Vols. (*4th Impression*.)
- SAINT AUGUSTINE: SELECT LETTERS. Trans. by  
J. H. Baxter.
- SALLUST. Trans. by J. C. Rolfe. (*2nd Impression, revised*.)
- SCRIPTORES HISTORIAE AUGUSTAE. Trans. by  
D. Magie. 3 Vols. Vols. I. and II. (Vol. I. *2nd Im-  
pression revised*.)
- SENECA: EPISTULAE MORALES. Trans. by R. M.  
Gummere. 3 Vols. (Vols. I. and II. *2nd Impression*,  
Vol. II. *revised*.)
- SENECA: MORAL ESSAYS. Trans. by J. W. Basore.  
3 Vols. Vol. I.
- SENECA: TRAGEDIES. Trans. by F. J. Miller.  
2 Vols. (*2nd Impression revised*.)
- STATIUS. Trans. by J. H. Mozley. 2 Vols.
- SUETONIUS. Trans. by J. C. Rolfe. 2 Vols. (*4th Im-  
pression revised*.)
- TACITUS: DIALOGUS. Trans. by Sir Wm. Peterson;  
and AGRICOLA AND GERMANIA. Trans. by Maurice  
Hutton. (*3rd Impression*.)
- TACITUS: HISTORIES AND ANNALS. Trans. by  
C. H. Moore and J. Jackson. 3 Vols. Vols. I. and II.
- TERENCE. Trans. by John Sargeant. 2 Vols. (*5th Imp.*)
- TERTULLIAN: APOLOGIA AND DE SPECTACULIS.  
Trans. by T. R. Glover. MINUCIUS FELIX. Trans.  
by G. H. Rendall.
- VELLEIUS PATERCULUS AND RES GESTAE DIVI  
AUGUSTI. Trans. by F. W. Shipley.
- VIRGIL. Trans. by H. R. Fairclough. 2 Vols. (Vols. I.  
*10th Impression*, II. *8th Impression*.)
- VITRUVIUS: DE ARCHITECTURA. Trans. by F.  
Granger. 2 Vols. Vol. I.

# THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

## GREEK AUTHORS

- ACHILLES TATIUS. Trans. by S. Gaselee.  
AENEAS TACTICUS, ASCLEPIODOTUS AND ONASANDER. Trans. by The Illinois Greek Club.  
AESCHINES. Trans. by C. D. Adams.  
AESCHYLUS. Trans. by H. Weir Smyth. 2 Vols. (Vols. I. 3rd Impression, II. 2nd Impression revised.)  
APOLLODORUS. Trans. by Sir James G. Frazer. 2 Vols.  
APOLLONIUS RHODIUS. Trans. by R. C. Seaton. (4th Impression.)  
THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS. Trans. by Kirsopp Lake. 2 Vols. (Vol. I. 5th Impression, II. 4th Impression.)  
APPIAN'S ROMAN HISTORY. Trans. by Horace White. 4 Vols. (Vols. I. 3rd, IV. 2nd Impression.)  
ARATUS: cf. CALLIMACHUS.  
ARISTOPHANES. Trans. by Benjamin Bickley Rogers. 3 Vols. (Verse translation.) (3rd Impression.)  
ARISTOTLE: THE "ART" OF RHETORIC. Trans. by J. H. Freese.  
ARISTOTLE: THE NICOMACHEAN ETHICS. Trans. by H. Rackham.  
ARISTOTLE: THE PHYSICS. Trans. by the Rev. P. Wicksteed and F. M. Cornford. 2 Vols. Vol. I.  
ARISTOTLE: POETICS: "LONGINUS": ON THE SUBLIME. Trans. by W. Hamilton Fyfe, AND DEMETRIUS: ON STYLE. Trans. by W. Rhys Roberts.  
ARRIAN: HISTORY OF ALEXANDER AND INDICA. Trans. by the Rev. E. Iliffe Robson. 2 Vols. Vol. I.  
ATHENAEUS: THE DEIPNOSOPHISTS. Trans. by C. B. Gulick. 7 Vols. Vols. I.-IV.  
CALLIMACHUS AND LYCOPHRON. Trans. by A. W. Mair, AND ARATUS, trans. by G. R. Mair.  
CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA. Trans. by the Rev. G. W. Butterworth.  
COLLUTHUS: cf. OPIAN.  
DAPHNIS AND CHLOE. Thornley's translation revised by J. M. Edmonds: AND PARTHENIUS. Trans. by S. Gaselee. (2nd Impression.)  
DEMOSTHENES: DE CORONA AND DE FALSA LEGATIONE. Trans. by C. A. Vince and J. H. Vince.

## THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

- DEMOSTHENES: OLYNTHIACS, PHILIPPICS, LEP-  
TINES, AND MINOR SPEECHES. Trans. by J. H. Vince.
- DIO CASSIUS: ROMAN HISTORY. Trans. by E. Cary.  
9 Vols. (Vol. II. *2nd Impression*.)
- DIOGENES LAERTIUS. Trans. by R. D. Hicks. 2 Vols.  
(Vol. I. *2nd Impression*.)
- EPICETUS. Trans. by W. A. Oldfather. 2 Vols.
- EURIPIDES. Trans. by A. S. Way. 4 Vols. (Verse trans.)  
(Vols. I. and II. *5th*, III. *3rd*, IV. *4th Imp*.)
- EUSEBIUS: ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY. Trans.  
by Kirsopp Lake. 2 Vols. Vol. I.
- GALEN: ON THE NATURAL FACULTIES. Trans. by  
A. J. Brock. (*2nd Impression*.)
- THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY. Trans. by W. R. Paton.  
5 Vols. (Vol. I. *3rd*, II. *2nd Impression*.)
- THE GREEK BUCOLIC POETS (THEOCRITUS, BION,  
MOSCHUS). Trans. by J. M. Edmonds. (*5th Imp*.)
- HERODES, ETC. A. D. KNOX: *cf.* THEOPHRASTUS,  
CHARACTERS.
- HERODOTUS. Trans. by A. D. Godley. 4 Vols. (Vol.  
I. *3rd*, Vols. II-IV, *2nd Impression*.)
- HESIOD AND THE HOMERIC HYMNS. Trans. by  
H. G. Evelyn White. (*4th Impression*.)
- HIPPOCRATES AND HERACLEITUS. Trans. by  
W. H. S. Jones and E. T. Withington. 4 Vols.
- HOMER: ILIAD. Trans. by A. T. Murray. 2 Vols.  
(Vol. I. *3rd Impression*, Vol. II. *2nd Impression*.)
- HOMER: ODYSSEY. Trans. by A. T. Murray. 2 Vols.  
(Vols. I. *4th Impression*, Vol. II. *3rd Impression*.)
- ISAEUS. Trans. by E. S. Forster.
- ISOCRATES. Trans. by G. Norlin. 3 Vols. Vols. I. and II.
- JOSEPHUS. Trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray. 8 Vols.  
Vols. I.-IV.
- JULIAN. Trans. by Wilmer Cave Wright. 3 Vols. (Vol. I.  
*2nd Impression*.)
- LUCIAN. Trans. by A. M. Harmon. 8 Vols. Vols. I.-IV.  
(Vols. I. and II. *3rd Impression*.)
- LYCOPHRON: *cf.* CALLIMACHUS.
- LYRA GRAECA. Trans. by J. M. Edmonds. 3 Vols.  
(Vol. I. *2nd Edition revised and enlarged*.)
- LYSIAS. Trans. by W. R. M. Lamb.

## THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

- MARCUS AURELIUS. Trans. by C. R. Haines. (3rd. *Impression revised.*)
- MENANDER. Trans. by F. G. Allinson. (2nd *Imp. rev.*)
- OPPIAN, COLLUTHUS AND TRYPHIODORUS. Trans. by A. W. Mair.
- PARTHENIUS: *cf.* DAPHNIS AND CHLOE.
- PAUSANIAS: DESCRIPTION OF GREECE. Trans. by W. H. S. Jones. 5 Vols. and Companion Vol. Vols. I. and II. (Vol. I. 2nd *Impression.*)
- PHILO. Trans. by F. H. Colson and the Rev. G. H. Whitaker. 10 Vols. Vols. I.-III.
- PHILOSTRATUS: THE LIFE OF APOLLONIUS OF TYANA. Trans. by F. C. Conybeare. 2 Vols. (Vols. I. 3rd, II. 2nd *Impression.*)
- PHILOSTRATUS AND EUNAPIUS: LIVES OF THE SOPHISTS. Trans. by Wilmer Cave Wright.
- PINDAR. Trans. by Sir J. E. Sandys. (5th *Imp. rev.*)
- PLATO: CHARMIDES, ALCIBIADES I. and II., HIPPARCHUS, THE LOVERS, THEAGES, MINOS, EPINOMIS. Trans. by W. R. M. Lamb.
- PLATO: CRATYLUS, PARMENIDES, GREATER AND LESSER HIPPIAS. Trans. by H. N. Fowler.
- PLATO: EUTHYPHRO, APOLOGY, CRITO, PHAEDO, PHAEDRUS. Trans. by H. N. Fowler. (6th *Impression.*)
- PLATO: LACHES, PROTAGORAS, MENO, EUTHYDEMUS. Trans. by W. R. M. Lamb.
- PLATO: LAWS. Trans. by the Rev. R. G. Bury. 2 Vols.
- PLATO: LYSIS, SYMPOSIUM, GORGIAS. Trans. by W. R. M. Lamb.
- PLATO: REPUBLIC. Trans. by Paul Shorey. 2 Vols. Vol. I.
- PLATO: STATESMAN, PHILEBUS. Trans. by H. N. Fowler; ION. Trans. by W. R. M. Lamb.
- PLATO: THEAETETUS, SOPHIST. Trans. by H. N. Fowler. (2nd *Impression.*)
- PLATO: TIMAEUS, CRITIAS, CLITOPHO, MENEXENUS, EPISTULAE. Trans. by the Rev. R. G. Bury.
- PLUTARCH: THE PARALLEL LIVES. Trans. by B. Perrin. 11 Vols. (Vols. I., II. and VII. 2nd *Imp.*)
- PLUTARCH: MORALIA. Trans. by F. C. Babbitt. 14 Vols. Vols. I.-III.
- POLYBIUS. Trans. by W. R. Paton. 6 Vols.

## THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

- PROCOPIUS; HISTORY OF THE WARS. Trans. by H. B. Dewing. 7 Vols. Vols. I.-V.  
QUINTUS SMYRNAEUS. Trans. by A. S. Way. (Verse.)  
ST. BASIL: THE LETTERS. Trans. by R. Deferrari. 4 Vols. Vols. I.-III.  
ST. JOHN DAMASCENE: BARLAAM AND IOASAPH. Trans. by the Rev. G. R. Woodward and Harold Mattingly.  
SOPHOCLES. Trans. by F. Storr. 2 Vols. (Verse translation.) (Vols. I. *5th Impression*, II. *4th Impression*.)  
STRABO: GEOGRAPHY. Trans. by Horace L. Jones. 8 Vols. Vols. I.-VII. (Vol. I. *2nd Impression*.)  
THEOPHRASTUS: CHARACTERS. Trans. by J. M. Edmonds; HERODES, CERCIDAS AND THE GREEK CHOLIAMBIC POETS. Trans. by A. D. Knox.  
THEOPHRASTUS: ENQUIRY INTO PLANTS. Trans. by Sir Arthur Hort, Bart. 2 Vols.  
THUCYDIDES. Trans. by C. F. Smith. 4 Vols. (Vols. I.-III. *2nd Imp. rev.*)  
TRYPHIODORUS: *cf.* OPPIAN.  
XENOPHON: CYROPAEDIA. Trans. by Walter Miller. 2 Vols. (Vol. I. *2nd Impression*.)  
XENOPHON: HELLENICA, ANABASIS, APOLOGY, AND SYMPOSIUM. Trans. by C. L. Brownson and O. J. Todd. 3 Vols. (Vol. I. *2nd Impression*.)  
XENOPHON: MEMORABILIA AND OECONOMICUS. Trans. by E. C. Marchant.  
XENOPHON: SCRIPTA MINORA. Trans. by E. C. Marchant.

## VOLUMES IN PREPARATION

### GREEK AUTHORS

- ARISTOTLE: ATHENIAN CONSTITUTION, H. Rackham.  
ARISTOTLE: METAPHYSICS, H. Tredennick.  
ARISTOTLE: ON THE MOTION AND PROGRESSION OF ANIMALS, E. S. Forster.  
ARISTOTLE: ORGANON, W. M. L. Hutchinson.  
ARISTOTLE: POLITICS, H. Rackham.

## THE LOEB CLASSICAL LIBRARY

DEMOSTHENES: MEIDIAS, ANDROTION, ARISTOCRATES, TIMOCRATES, J. H. Vince.

DEMOSTHENES: PRIVATE ORATIONS, G. M. Calhoun.

DIO CHRYSOSTOM, J. W. Cohoon.

GREEK IAMBIC AND ELEGIAC POETRY, J. M. Edmonds.

PAPYRI, A. S. Hunt.

PHILOSTRATUS: IMAGINES, Arthur Fairbanks.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, the Rev. R. G. Burv.

### LATIN AUTHORS

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS, J. C. Rolfe.

CICERO: CATILINE ORATIONS, B. L. Ullman.

CICERO: DE NATURA DEORUM, H. Rackham.

CICERO: DE ORATORE, ORATOR, BRUTUS, Charles Stuttaford.

CICERO: PRO SEXTIO, IN VATINIUM, PRO CAELIO, PRO PROV. CONS., PRO BALBO, J. H. Freese.

ENNIUS, LUCILIUS, AND OTHER SPECIMENS OF OLD LATIN, E. H. Warmington.

OVID: FASTI, Sir J. G. Frazer.

PLINY: NATURAL HISTORY, W. H. S. Jones and L. F. Newman.

ST. JEROME'S LETTERS: F. A. Wright.

SIDONIUS, E. V. Arnold and W. B. Anderson.

VALERIUS FLACCUS, A. F. Scholfield.

### *DESCRIPTIVE PROSPECTUS ON APPLICATION*

---

|          |   |   |                       |
|----------|---|---|-----------------------|
| London   | . | . | WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD |
| New York | . | . | G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS   |